

Proceedings of the
INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
ON THE CENTENARY
ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST
COUNCIL FOR CHINA

紀念第一屆中國教務會議一百週年
國際學術會議論文集

EDITOR 編者

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聖若瑟大學
UNIVERSITY OF
SAINT JOSEPH
MACAO

**Proceedings of the International Symposium
on the Centenary of the First Council for China
(1924-2024)**



聖若瑟大學[†]
UNIVERSITY OF
SAINT JOSEPH
MACAO

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Acknowledgements

The very idea of organizing the International Symposium for the Centenary of the First Council in China, more fondly known as the Shanghai Council, was born out of a conversation with Fr. Gianni Criveller, the former director of the Master's in Religious Studies program (with a special focus on Christianity in China) at our Catholic university in Macao. Under Fr. Criveller's brief but fruitful aegis, the foundation for advanced research in Sino-Catholic studies within the modern local Catholic academic community was laid. A dedicated cohort of local Macao Master's students emerged from the program, keenly enriched by the historiographical perspectives inspired by Fr. Criveller's own scholarship. A clear outcome is that one of the contributors to the Symposium, Mr. Keith Ip, the current director of the diocesan Department of Historical Archives, is a proud graduate of the aforementioned Master's program.

I, too, as a colleague of Fr. Criveller, was deeply indebted to this PIME missionary for helping me carefully deliberate on the direction of my doctoral research, which compared Cardinal Newman and Ma Xiangbo. Thus, in realizing Fr. Criveller's proposal for the Symposium to be hosted by the University of Saint Joseph (USJ)—then still the only Catholic university in the PRC before 2024—this initiative must be seen within the broader continuum of the intellectual legacy initiated by Valignano and Ricci. That is, to capitalize on Macao's unique position as a breeding ground for people and projects that augur the greater glory of the Catholic mission in the “Far East” (a term coined by Newman when preaching about St. Francis Xavier in a sermon entitled “The Second Spring” on 13 July 1852).

I clearly remember that shortly before the start of the Symposium in June, I was called to anoint a Franciscan Missionary of Mary sister at her deathbed. She was a centenarian, born before the Shanghai Council. One can rightly imagine that her life as a seasoned religious was, to no small extent, shaped and formed by the implementation of the decisions of this Chinese national Council and those of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. The various academic symposia centered on the theme of the China Council and its significance also

serve as occasions to remember the silent laborers in the Lord's vineyard, who, each in their unique way, incarnate the aspirations of the council fathers with a common *sensus fidei* that runs deeper than speeches and research, despite the vicissitudes of the past century.

The practical significance of this Symposium at USJ—especially for the Faculty of Religious Studies and Philosophy—is that it gave our Greater China partner institutions and scholars the confidence to embark on new collaborative projects, most notably the 13th Catholic Studies Forum for Young Chinese Scholars, held at USJ less than six months after the Symposium, and hopefully many more to come.

A special word of thanks goes to the team of university administrative staff—our PR, IT, and Residence Hall teams—for their promotional, technical, and logistical support, and especially to Ms. Maria Lei and Dr. Jacqueline Leung for ensuring the smooth running of the entire Symposium. Gratitude is also due to our faculty member, Prof. Martyn Percy, for proofreading the papers included in this publication.

The Diocese of Macau will celebrate the 450th anniversary of its founding in 2026. I believe this Symposium in Macao serves as a fitting opening salvo for this landmark event in the history of the Far East mission. May Our Lady of Sheshan keep watch over the billions of conscious souls awaiting to profess the light and truth of Christ.

劉偉傑神父 *Rev'd Dr. Cyril J. Law, Jr.*
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Contents

Preface.....	5
Learning to hear the Culture: Insights from Celso Costantini, the First Apostolic Delegate in China and President of the <i>Primum Concilium Sinense</i> by Savio Tai-Fai Hon	9
How many Chinese Participants are there in The First Plenary Council of China in 1924? By Anthony Lam	29
The First Chinese Council (1924): the Observations on the Modern Method of Evangelization (1929) by Blessed Paolo Manna, PIME, and the future of Mission by Gianni Criveller	45
The Concilium Sinense 1924: its Inspiration and Significance for the Catholic Church in Mainland China Today by Mei-xiu Wang	55
The Christianization of China as Precondition for the Sinification of Christianity by Leopold Leeb	69
Advance and Retreat: Music and Mission in the Church in China Before and After 1924 by David Francis Urrows	79
The Sensus Fidelium and the Legacy of <i>Primum Concilium Sinense</i> by Rachel Xiao-hong Zhu	93
From <i>Maximum Illud</i> to the First National Synod <i>Primum Concilium Sinenses</i> : Contributions from the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) by Franz Gassner	119
1924上海主教會議聖樂相關法令：歷史解讀與今日意義 洪力行	149
Biblia Sinensis? The Vision of a Chinese Translation of Scripture in the <i>Primum Concilium Sinense</i> (1924) by Andrew Chin-Hei Leong	167

三次上海大會與二十世紀上半葉天主教出版事業 潘致遠	187
Commissio Synodalis in Sinis: History and Role in Catholic Education under Celso Costantini (1928-1933) by Bibiana Yee-Ying Wong	211
Bring the discussion back to the table: A comparison between the content of the Canton Conference (1667-1668) and the Shanghai Council (1924) by Benedict Keith Ka-Kei Ip	241

Preface

History is full of events which mark an inflection point: a moment when it makes sense to talk of a time before and a time after. Our Christian dating system does precisely this. It speaks of time before the Incarnation as “Before Christ”, and that after it as “Anno Domini” – the Year of the Lord. It recognises that the Incarnation is of such significance that it is not possible to consider even the passage of time as unaltered by the mere fact of Christ becoming Man for our salvation. But we do not have to confine ourselves to events of such cosmic significance to see the same thing. Historians have long viewed the French Revolution and being an event, whose consequences have been so deep and globe-encompassing, mean that accounts of history must recognise the epochal nature of what began on 14th July 1789. There are histories of before the Revolution and histories of after: they are not the same. For the history of the Catholic Church in China, the First Plenary Council of China, held in Shanghai in 1924 is, perhaps, such an epoch delineating event. The event that the essays in this book celebrate, to give it its formal Latin title *Primum Concilium Sinensis*, was a moment when the Catholic Church in China moved from the provisional to the permanent: from the always contingent, fragile and conditional, to being definite, resilient and fixed – its near death and resurrection in the period immediately after the establishment of New China notwithstanding. Taken with the consecration of China to Our Lady at Sheshan in May 1947, as its spiritual counterpart, the Council marked a point at which it is possible to see the Catholic presence in the country as moving beyond the province of being always on the receiving end of foreign missionary activity, to being responsible itself for the spread of the Good News in China.

The stuttering attempts at establishing Catholic Christianity in China, stretching back at least as far as the arrival in Beijing in 1294 of the Franciscan missionary and later Archbishop of the city, Giovanni di Montecorvino, had seen astonishing advances and heartbreaking reversals over six centuries, Periods when it was just possible to imagine the conversion of China was just around the corner, followed by exclusion, persecution and almost complete eradication. Recognising that these attempts had finally driven roots down deep enough into Chinese soil to see a stable if not unchallenging future for the Chinese Church, upon his arrival in China as Apostolic Delegate in November 1922, Archbishop Celso Constantini set about establishing for himself the real

state of the Church in the country. By the September of the following year he had satisfied himself that the Chinese Catholic Church was sufficiently well established and possessed of a genuine vitality that the challenges facing it could best be met by a unified direction and coordination between the various diocese and religious congregation, in order to serve the localisation of the mission, in accordance with the principles of the 1919 Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* (to which Constantini is widely considered to have been a major contributor, if not author). He obtained the necessary Papal consent in late 1923 and the Council was scheduled to open late the following Spring.

The Council opened on 15th May 1924, at the Cathedral of St. Ignatius in Xujiahui, Shanghai. The Council brought together 105 participants, including 25 bishops and vicars apostolic, numerous missionaries, and Chinese clergy from across the country. Among the participants were both foreign missionaries, primarily from European congregations such as the Jesuits, Vincentians, Dominicans and Franciscans, and a growing number of Chinese priests and religious, reflecting the Vatican's increasing emphasis on developing a native clergy. The liturgical tone of the Council was deeply Roman, following Latin rites, but it was also infused with a pastoral sensitivity toward Chinese culture and traditions. Daily liturgies and solemn Masses were celebrated throughout the month-long gathering, with the Council opened by a pontifical High Mass and closed with a solemn *Te Deum*.

At its closing on 12th June 1924, the Council's formal output consisted of 264 decrees, which addressed matters of ecclesiastical discipline, missionary strategy, clergy formation, the regulation of sacraments, and catechetical instruction. Particularly important was its call for the promotion of an indigenous Chinese clergy and the eventual appointment of Chinese bishops—a goal realized only two years later in 1926 when the first six Chinese bishops were consecrated by Pope Pius XI in St Peter's. The Council also condemned syncretism and superstition but called for discernment in adapting certain local customs that were not in conflict with Catholic doctrine. In this way, the Council of Shanghai laid the groundwork for a more autonomous and culturally embedded Chinese Church.

So much for the historical data. They make clear enough that the Shanghai Council stands as a pivotal moment in the history of Chinese Catholicism and one which allows us to be confident in claiming that there is a time before it and another, a time after the event which can only be understood in the light of the event of the Council. It was this significance that led the University of Saint Joseph Macao to arrange an academic conference in June 2024 to mark the cen-

tenary of the Council. It was a remarkable event on so many levels. Academically it brought together a large collection of scholars from China and across the world, who shared perspectives from theology, history, religious, cultural and film studies, and political science. In this publication of the proceedings of the conference, the editor, Professor Thomas Cai, has brought together the very best of the conference papers and, as Rector of the University, I am delighted that we are able to offer them as a permanent record of the conference. As one of the keynote presenters at the conference, Archbishop Savio Hon reminded us, the very best hermeneutic for understanding *Primum Concilium Sinensis* is as a call for the Church to recognise the importance in China of the interplay between the *auditus fidei* and the *auditus culturae*, listening to the truths revealed in the Catholic Faith whilst simultaneously reflecting upon the truths expressed in Chinese culture. This volume is the contribution of the University of Saint Joseph Macao to that task.

Rev'd Prof. Stephen Morgan
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Learning to hear the Culture: Insights from Celso Costantini the First Apostolic Delegate in China and President of the *Primum Concilium Sinense*

Savio Tai-Fai Hon
Apostolic Nuncio to Malta and Libya

Abstract

Archbishop Celso Costantini, at the age of 46, with only one year of episcopate, was nominated the first Apostolic Delegate, and started his navigation to the unknown, arriving in China in 1922. He was given the urgent task to convoke and preside the First Chinese Council – *Primum Concilium Sinense* (PCS 1924).

Costantini described the missionaries and Missions with a Roman proverb: *Senatori boni viri, Senatus autem mala bestia*, meaning individual missionaries were good men, but the Missions were bad beasts. It was because the Missions were too much attached to or dependent on the colonial powers – the French Protectorate, that hurt the Chinese people. Pope Benedict XV intervened with his *Maximum Illud*. Pope Pius XI sent Costantini with a clear aim: *China to the Chinese, the Chinese to Christ*.

One of the contributions of Costantini to the PCS was the humble learning mode he set for the Church. The more the Church learns, the better the Church teaches. *Ecclesia discens, Ecclesia docens*. This essay pinpoints some of his learning experiences: learn to love, to be true, to hear, to heal, to walk together, to design an *Ecclesial Auditus Culturae*.

Key Words: First Chinese Council, Celso Costantini, Missionary Revolution, Indigenization, wisdom, charity, Protectorate, *Jiaoan*, *Auditus Culturae*, Holy See.

Introduction

The year of 2022 happened to be the Fourth Centenary of the Foundation of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide (1622-2022) and the Centenary of the appointment of the First Apostolic Delegate for China in the person of Celso Costantini (1876-1958). The two commemorations have much to do with the Evangelization in China. Coincidentally, Costantini was my predecessor, as the Secretary of Propaganda Fide, after his mission in China. From him I have learnt interesting insights for the so-called *Auditus Culturae* hearing the voice of the Culture¹, especially in the event of the *Primum Concilium Sinese* 1924 (hereafter PCS).²

This essay is chiefly based on his memoirs. The reasons for which he wrote them were expressed this way:

One evening in Beijing(1930), (...) after a serious illness, (...) I went (...) to the imperial park (...) full of large trees. (...) There was a widespread sense of **melancholy and sweet recollection** in the place. Many leaves had already fallen to the ground. (...) my life resembles one of those autumnal trees (...) I have also decided to pick some dry leaves up; the leaves are no longer of any use, but may still contain some hidden and useful wisdom in germ (...). Nothing remarkable was in my life, but extraordinary were the times and places in which I often had to live.³

Costantini resembled his life to a tree, and his reminiscences to dry leaves – yet containing useful wisdom. He seemed to follow the Chinese Lao-Zhuang

1 I find many interesting insights in the writings of C. Costantini, in particular the two volumes: *Con i missionari in Cina* (hereafter CMC). *Memorie di fatti e di idee*, Unione Missionaria del Clero in Italia, vol. I (Roma, 1946), and Vol. II (Roma, 1947). This is a collection of materials and reflections from his own diary, notebook, diplomatic dispatches, and letters. He did this because he found himself in an interesting period of living through two revolutions: the external one of China, and the internal of the Missions. He found the necessity to study the missionary problems *in novitate spiritus et non in vetustate litterae* (Rm 7:6 in the newness of the spirit, not oldness of letter) Cf. CMC I, p.V. In some way these writings have become the primary sources of the subsequent studies. See also Costantini's *Foglie Secche. Esperienze e memorie di un vecchio prete*, Unione Missionaria del Clero in Italia, Roma 1948 – edizione critica a cura di Bruno Fabio Pighin (Padova: Marcianum Press, 2013) and *Ultime Foglie. Ricordi e Pensieri*, Unione Missionaria del Clero in Italia (Roma, 1953).

2 Cf. CMC I,161-163. The PCS was meant for the compilation of a Missionary Codes in China after the Codes 1917. Cf. *Primum Concilium Sinese anno 1924 a die 14 maii ad diem 12 iunii in ecclesia S. Ignati de Zi-ka-Wei* (PCS). *Acta, decreta et normae, vota*, Shanghai. (Typographia missionis catholicae, 1929); Paul Wang Jiyou 王繼友, *Le Premier Concile Plénier Chinois – Shanghai 1924. Droit canonique missionnaire forgé en Chine*. Preface de Jean Charbonnier MEP (Paris: Cerf, 2010); and J. Metzler, *Die Synoden in China, Japan und Korea 1570-1931 Konziliengeschichte* (Padreborn-Münich-Vienne: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1980); Leo Leeb, “The National Synod of 1924 in Shanghai and the Catholic View of Chinese Culture”, in *Verbum SVD*, fasciculus 1-2, 60(2019), 42-57.

3 *Foglie Secche*. The quotation in this essay is taken from the edizione critica a cura di Bruno F. Pighin (Venezia: Marcianum Press, 2013), 33.

philosophy in attempt to discover the utility of the apparent uselessness of the “dry leaves” – by writing about the events and peoples he treasured in memories. He was conscious that not every thing he said or did was right or useful, notwithstanding his good will, but in many things he did **learn** some wisdom that enabled him to **hear** better God speaking through the local culture. In this essay, I try to pick up some of his “dry leaves” and to show his insights.

A constant learner

In 1876, born in a devout Christian family in Castions of Zoppola.⁴ Costantini learnt to love God. In 1899, he was ordained priest, holding doctorates in Philosophy and Theology, and became a pastor in the Parish of Concordia. His talent and passion for art emerged significantly in this period and founded the Review *Arte Cristiana*.

Providence did not give Costantini much peace for neither pastoral care nor religious arts. He underwent the terrible First World War in which as a military chaplain he came to realize how deceiving the world was.

Until today, we Christians have the same struggle between God and Mammon – in Augustinian terms – between the two cities, the heavenly and earthly, a complex mixture of the two in our life journey. Some openly applaud God but are hiddenly against God, and others do contrariwise. Being true to oneself is never easy.

In 1920 Costantini was appointed as Apostolic Administrator of Fiume and in 1921 consecrated Bishop. In his territory, there were military conflicts, and he brilliantly averted a major bloodshed. He learnt one important truth: only in God, one finds the real peace if one listens to Him even amidst the unexpected adversities.⁵

A few months later, out of the blue he was asked by Pope Pius XI to be the First Apostolic Delegate to lead the Missions in China – a land he had never dreamt of.

Finding himself in China as a superior or leader, he needed to stay with

4 About the life of Costantini, see the article of Bruno Fabio Pighin, *Per una biografia del cardinale Celso Costantini*, in AA.VV., *Il Cardinale Celso Costantini e la Cina. Un protagonista nella Chiesa e nel mondo del XX secolo*, a cura di Paolo Goi (Diocesi di Concordia – Pordenone 2008) 21-44; B. Pighin, *Il Cardinale Celso Costantini (1876-1958). L'anima di un missionario* (Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana 2014).

5 Cf. *Foglie Secche*, 312-326.

other foreign missionaries facing the same struggle between the “two cities”, feeling torn between the two loves: Church or Patria, without knowing exactly what to do, and being haunted by doubt if he could bring any good to China at all?

1. Learning to love

In 1922 Costantini before his departure for China, came to Turin, intending to go to pray in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of *Consolata* – a holy place visited by many missionaries before their departure. Years after, he articulated well the following experience.

It was raining. I was at the train station of Turin and intended to go to Consolata while waiting for the slowing down of the rain. A woman holding one hand of a grim blind girl who opened another hand begging for alms. I had no intention to give her anything. Sometimes, I would not give alms to the street people but rather save the money for the home I opened in Portogruaro for the children who lost their parents during the war.

Then an old woman passed by, telling the mother of the blind girl, “Take this. I can only give you two coins. I am a poor woman selling shoelaces for my livelihood. Today the Lord helped me. Among us the poor, we know each other better and more willing to do charity. I am sorry that I can only offer you little: coming from a good heart.” The other replied, “thanks, thanks ...”.

I felt mortified by the generosity of this vendor of shoelaces. She was unwittingly giving a lesson to a Bishop. I reached out my pocket and gave some money to the poor girl, while ashamed of my too much calculated prudence. Charity is beautiful, Christian, pure, and does not make too much calculation.⁶

After many years, Costantini articulated this episode revealing his earnestness to learn **to love without too much calculation**. The two coins would not be sufficient to solve the problem of poverty, but good enough to restore trust in people and in God.

On the one hand, he was troubled by the thought to navigate the unknown, but on the other, he was settled by the love for the mission as said by St Paul, “*Caritas Christi urget nos*” (2 Cor 5:14).

⁶ CMC I, 10.

On 8 November 1922, Costantini arrived in Hong Kong. He witnessed a very weak Chinese government. China was invaded by the Western powers and tormented by civil war among the militias. Violent attacks against the Missions were not uncommon.⁷ Nevertheless, China should rise and take control of its own destiny: *Let China be to the Chinese*. Were the Missions able to help?

What then was a Mission? It was an ecclesiastical circumscription in a territory defined by the Holy See, which would entrust it to the care of a Western missionary congregation or religious order.

In 1923, there were 54 Missions, divided into three classes: *Apostolic Vicariate*, *Apostolic Prefecture*, and *Independent Mission*. For the governance of a *Vicariate* the Pope would appoint a bishop, while for rest, it would suffice for the *Propaganda Fide* to appoint a priest. They were asked to evangelize the people while building churches, clinics, schools, orphanages, factories (...). A Mission when better developed would be elevated to an Apostolic Vicariate – a local Church guided by a bishop in communion with the Pope and all other bishops – reflecting its Catholicity.⁸

The missionaries of religious orders would naturally use their resources to consolidate *only* the Apostolic Vicariate entrusted to them. If someone outside their circle, not to speak of a Chinese, was named Apostolic Vicar, the religious might frown their eyebrows or snub at him – mirroring inequality and factionalism among the clergy.

In the eyes of the Chinese, a Mission looked like a business corporation (*Azienda*) adorned with Western national flags, relying on the French Protectorate. Behind the smiles of the missionaries, there lurked a knife – the French Protectorate⁹ due to the unequal treaties – that enabled the Western powers to hurt the Chinese.¹⁰

Regarding this, Pope Benedict XV in his apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* 1919, made quite a bitter criticism.

7 Between 1912 and 1933, the number of attacks went increasingly high. Between 1926 and 1931, there were 36 missionaries killed and 276 captured. See Liu Guo-Peng 劉國鵬, 《剛恆毅與中國天主教的本地化》社會科學文獻出版社. *Celso Costantini and the Indigenization of the Catholic Church in China* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2009), 359-360.

8 Cf. Liu Guo-Peng, 13; P. Pascua M. D'Elia, *Missions Catholiques en Chine* (Zi-Ka-Wei, 1934), 62.

9 Cf. Liu Guo-Peng, 313-314; Wang Jiyu, 174-176.

10 See the article of Cheng Fang Chong 陳方中, *Il Cardinale Celso Costantini nella vita della Chiesa cinese*, in *Il Cardinale Celso Costantini e la Cina*, 103-118; see also the article of Ruggero Simonato, “Come un vino generoso e nuovo in botti vecchie”: *Memoria e Vicende del Primo Delegato Apostolico in Cina*, in AA.VV., *Da Castions di Zoppola alla Cina. Opere e giorni del Cardinale Celso Costantini 1876-1958*, a cura di F. Metz (Comune di Zoppola, 2008), 257-293.

We have been deeply saddened by some recent accounts of missionary life, accounts that displayed more zeal for the profit of some particular nation than for the growth of the kingdom of God. (n.20)

The same Pope then made an important turn for the Missions, namely, to encourage the plantation of the local Church guided by the indigenous clergy. To achieve this, there was much to learn and to do. However, not every Mission agreed.¹¹

2. Learning to be true

On learning, Costantini delivered an interesting speech for the opening of Fu Jen University in Beijing. Learning is an inborn ability to be developed in one's life journey. The learners *"are not empty vessels to be filled, but they are hearths to be lit; (...) they are immortal souls to be directed towards their supreme destiny (...) The true self of a man is his immortal soul, namely, the upright, sincere, and loyal spirit, in whom full trust can be placed."*¹²

However, in light of Mencius' thought, Costantini developed an important part of his speech with the distinction between the true and false self in a person. When the self was so deviated by the carnal desires of seeking only interest while abandoning the benevolence and uprightness, as to act against one's moral conscience, the self would no longer be true to one's own original nature and final destiny. As held by Mencius, to "recover" the true self from the false, one must re-enter one's own innermost being through reflection, alone in the serenity of mind, and away from external dissipations. Once the true self re-established, one might learn further many other things, especially, the moral duties towards self, family, country, others, and towards God.

Costantini had a similar experience. "Why me?" Costantini posed this question, when he was notified about the appointment as the First Apostolic Delegate in China. He was at the age of 46, with only one year of episcopate, having no missionary experience, not to speak of China. Naturally, he asked for the dispensation from this pontifical decision, but it was not granted. He prayed – listening to God speaking in his heart.

11 See Cyril J. Law 劉偉傑, "Minimising Maximum Illud: Early Resistance to Missionary Inculturation in China", in *Orientis Aura* 5(2020): 7–22; Ernest P. Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony: China's Catholic Church and the French Religious Protectorate* (New York: Oxford University Press 2013), 213: "(For some missionaries) the pope's letter will be injurious to the Catholics of Europe, to the priests and to the Chinese Christians".

12 Constantini gave a speech for the official opening of Fu Jen University (26.09.1927). However, in 1925 Pope XI granted the faculty of establishing the University. Cf. CMC I, 454–457.

Costantini obeyed the Church, and ultimately, Christ, who asked the disciples to preach the Gospel as the greatest and holiest duty (the opening of the Apostolic Letter: *maximum illud sanctissimumque munus*). Costantini then wrote a letter of acceptance, while knowing his limits, promised obedience to the Pope having no other intention than to work with all his strength to the greater glory of God and the spread of His Kingdom.¹³

While sending Costantini to China, Pope Pius XI asked him to convey the message: *The Pope loves China and wishes it every good. Let China be to the Chinese*¹⁴.

In short, *to recover the true self, one should go through hardships and profound reflections*. Once the mind is rectified or purified, the true self may take up the Heavenly Mandate (*sanctissimum munus*).

3. Learning to listen

During his voyage to China, he noticed from afar through telescope some Western Buildings, which offended his soul as a missionary and as an artist. In this connection, he was impressed by a question raised by a Japanese girl: “If God became man, why not become man in Japan?”¹⁵ The question was relevant, for the great concern of the missionaries should be for the birth of Jesus not so much for his birthplace. Indeed, the missionaries should go out of the confine of his birthplace and to preach the birth of the Saviour – the Incarnation of the eternal Logos.

The mystery of Incarnation points to the ongoing entrance of the loving God into human history and the salvation of souls, in which the Church has been called to take an active part. If so, then the missionaries towards their hearers should never be offenders, but always friends to the point of becoming all things to all people (*omnia omnibus*)” (1 Cor 9: 22). Being so determined, Costantini followed the footstep of St Paul as a Missionary to an unknown land.¹⁶

Despite the sacrifices, goodness, and friendship of the missionaries, why there were so few genuine conversions among the Chinese? Something was

13 Costantini's Letter quoted from Bruno PIGHIN (ed. critica), *Il Ritratto Segreto del Cardinale Celso Costantini in 10,000 lettere dal 1892 al 1958*, (Venezia: Marcianum Press, 2012), 128.

14 CMC I, 4: “*Il Papa ama la Cina e desidera sinceramente il suo bene. La cina ai cinesi, i cinesi a Cristo*”.

15 Cf. CMC I, 18.

16 Cf. CMC I, 18.

amiss. What? Costantini prayed earnestly and observed. In an articulate way, he gathered some salient points theatrically from the mouth of a young Chinese – a typical patriot with a noble soul. Here is a short summary.¹⁷

Once, travelling from Shanghai to Hankow on a ship, Costantini met a young man, good-looking, well-dressed in European style, but shrouded with inexplicable melancholy. On his thin and refined face, this melancholy sometimes exudes a dejected arrogance, or an angry contempt. They chatted together. The young man came back from France, feeling grief and indignation at the chaos, civil wars, and the bullying from the foreigners in the country.

The foreigners were domineering not solely because of superior armament, but due to the disaccord maliciously sown among the warlords by those foreigners who were selling arms and strange ideas

Costantini switched the topic to Religion. The young man presented several challenges.

Fr. Frédéric-Vincent Lebbe (雷鳴遠) was a very good Missionary and friend of the Chinese, from whom the young man learnt many things. However, he was sent away by his own confreres, mainly because of his pro-China attitude a perspective not so much shared by many other missionaries.

The young man was willing to receive baptism. However, his father disagreed on the ground that Christianity was only suitable for Europe, whereas in China it would suffice to keep the Confucian moral teaching. Confucius was more ancient than Christ. And in no way were the Europeans morally superior to the Chinese. Why should Christianity be for the Chinese at all? Why should a Chinese go to a foreign religion for a better shape of humanity?

The French Government expelled the Priests and the Religious from France, yet under the pretext of protecting the missionaries, they dispatched their army everywhere for colonization.

Being a convert to Christianity, a Chinese would be called “the servant of the foreigners” and be considered a “black sheep” of the family and “betrayer” of the Country, whereas it was not the case for a Chinese to become a Buddhist or a Muslim. Why?

17 Cf. CMC I, 479-484: This dialogue took place in 1927, three years after the PCS, while Costantini was on a trip visiting different Missions. He wrote this dialogue in detail. Before the PCS, most of these problems were known to him, but they could not be solved in a short time. Now through this dialogue he wanted to stress the urgency for the implementation of the PCS, and to encourage all the missionaries to listen and to learn more.

The young man appreciated some individual missionaries, but not so much their Missions (*azienda*) which kept offending the dignity and the true love of a Chinese Patriot for China. A Chinese who joined the Missions would be called a *believer of rice or Eater of Religion*, who went to the Missions for the purpose of getting food or better livelihood.

The Foreign Missionaries had come to China for more than three centuries. Some Chinese priests were doubtless talented and capable, yet they were always inferior to those foreign missionaries who, knowing by far too little the Chinese language and culture, had to make every decision, especially, those decisions to maintain the “white” superiority.

The young man asked Costantini to observe the situation of the ship where they stayed. The flag was English. The Europeans were the masters. All the Chinese, including the English-speaking, were servile to them. The only Chinese characters in the ship were to indicate places forbidden to the Chinese.

To each of these points, Costantini tried to give some replies to soothe the young man, but in the meantime, he perceived one root problem: the mode of the Missions that time was exactly like that ship – simply of Europe, not of China.

4. Learning to heal

Wounds upon wounds were everywhere everyone. Because of the xenophobia or hatred against the foreigners, many rioters or bandits openly attacked the Missions: robbing houses, kidnapping people for extortion, killings and incendiaries. Consequently, foreign missionaries and their Missions became their “juicy target”. From 1840 till the time of Costantini there happened no less than 400 cases of anti-missionary conflict (*Jiaoan* 教案)¹⁸. These cases of anti-missionary conflict often provided good opportunities for Foreign Powers to demand China for compensations.

In June 1923 – a few months after Costantini’s arrival, some bandits kidnapped Fr. Angelo Melotto, OFM, of Hankow, for ransom. He was a very good-hearted missionary well accepted by the people. Costantini in the first few months after his arrival in China was living in Hankow where he came to have a good acquaintance with Merlotto from whom he understood more about the missionary work. As for the ransom, even if missionaries had nothing to

¹⁸ Cf. Liu Guo-Peng, 231.

pay, the Chinese Government, for the fear of the worse burden of compensation imposed later by the Foreigner Powers, would be obliged to pay. This time, since the bandits were deserters from the army, the Chinese Government sent troops to wipe them out, so the bandits killed Father Melotto in early September. Costantini was saddened by the news and moved by the great love of the late lamented missionary, saying, “*the last he breathed was the sentiments of admirable forces and Christian charity*”.¹⁹

Such conflicts were very intriguing and complicate. A Hebrew banker said sarcastically: “*Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur* (...) Blessed are those who suffered from persecution, because afterwards the Indemnity will come”.²⁰ Again, the question of indemnity somewhat pushed the missionaries to face the choice between God and Mammon.

For the death of Melotto the Chinese Government should compensate. Besides, the missionaries were willing to take the compensations for the loss and coverage of various expenses. But Costantini understood that this request would deepen the people’s hatred against the Church. He thus appealed to the faith of the people saying that the Church had never asked for compensation for the blood (*pretium sanguinis*) shed by martyrs or confessors of Christ. Besides, the faithful should not waste the life-long “sacrifice” of Fr. Melotto for charity. The Government was asked to bring the culprits to justice. The Church should waive its claim for compensation. The Bishop of Hankow also agreed on this for the sake of peace. Seeing this, the local people gathered a donation to build a hospital in memory of Father Melotto. The matter established a new mode of mediation for the *Jiaoan*’s.²¹

After all, the hospital became a symbol of **healing** for all the parties concerned.

5. Learning to walk together

Regarding compensations, some people criticized Costantini, pointing out that the protestant missionaries took the indemnities to do good deeds and even to build their universities. They even claimed that Costantini alone was not sufficient to tackle the issues. Having no instruction yet from Rome, Costantini should act on his own conscience and oppose the “market of money on the

19 Cf. CMC I, 144: “spirò con sentimenti di mirabile forza e carità cristiana”.

20 CMC I, 145.

21 Cf. CMC I, 144-148; Liu Guo-Peng, 342-345.

tomb of a worthy confessor of Christ”. He was alone and “distressed”²². He wanted so much to appease the missionaries, but his concern was to wash down their bad name of being “running dogs” of the Foreign Imperialism.

He realized that there were two groups of missionaries, holding two contrasting ideas. One was younger in age, less in number, assuming pro-China attitude, supported by the Chinese clergy; another was relatively older in age, greater in number, pro-French Protectorate.²³ The important task was to pull up all the synergy of the groups of contrasting opinions for the missionaries to walk together.

In fact, Costantini was appointed by the Holy See to convoke and to preside the *Primum Concilium Sinense* (PCS) in which all the Bishops or Heads of the Missions (Apostolic Prefectures and Vicariates) in China were called to participate in it and to walk together. Within the framework of the Code of Canon Law 1917 and Maximum Illud 1919, Costantini conducted the PCS to compile a code of missionary law. The preparatory commission started working in Wuchang hosted by Bishop Gennaro on 25th May 1923.

It was no easy task to unite and to guide all the Missions in the five ecclesiastical regions in China. With respect to the missionary bishops in China, Costantini was young and inexperienced. The only thing he had was the support of the Holy See with the clear instructions of Pope Pius XI and the Superiors in conformity with the Apostolic Letter of Benedict XV “*Maximum Illud*” 1919.²⁴ And in his opening speech to the PCS, he frankly admitted his own limits,

I feel deeply ashamed and confused by the idea that ‘without any merit on my part, the Lord sent me to participate in your labours’. However, you do not look at my miserable person, but rather at the will of him who has sent me, and his authority I represent here, in spite of my unworthiness (...).²⁵

He really felt so, because he was aware of certain non-acceptance from both the foreign missionaries and the local clergy.

First, Costantini was indeed the authoritative spokesman of *Maximum*

22 CMC I, 145.

23 The Italian historian, Ruggero Simonato used the biblical image of new wine and old wineskin to describe the two contrasting groups: “*Come un vino generoso e nuovo in botti vecchie*”, see note 10.

24 Costantini wrote also his reflection in CMC I, 161: *Io mi sentivo, personalmente, piccolo, umile, confuso, davanti a questi venerabili Vescovi; ma sapevo che, se la mia persona non valeva nulla, essi riconoscevano l'alto prestigio del Legato Pontificato; e ciò mi dava confidenza.*

25 The French version of the speech is found in Wang Ji-You, *Le Premier Concile Plénier Chinois*, 383.

illud, but he was well aware that most of the foreign missionaries were of different opinion. They somewhat “minimised” the document²⁶. Due to the long-time weakness and inability of the Chinese government, they believed that Europe should enter China to restore order, and prevent China from falling apart or into chaos, that would cause even greater suffering and bloodshed. In this vein, the “Protectorate” was a political “must” and providential “help” as well for the operations of all the Missions in China.²⁷

Secondly, Costantini had the idea of quickening steps of establishing of indigenous Missions, in view of the PCS. The Chinese clergy welcomed the idea, but unhappy about the way he did it. On December 12, 1923, the first Chinese Apostolic Vicariate of Puci was founded in a poorer area than others. That provoked certain displeasure and protesting voices among the Chinese clergy. Costantini admitted later that it had been done too hastily without hearing sufficiently the voices of the local clergy and that in future better places should be assigned to the local clergy as to avoid misunderstanding.²⁸

The PCS was an unprecedented meeting between the history of China and that of the Missions. Costantini saw the diffused light from this unique gathering. – the light in which he perceived the movement of the bishops, successors of the Apostles. They were not alone. Behind them, there were different Religious Orders, the Missions in different parts of China, and their predecessors, some of whom were radiating “red” for the “crimson” of the martyr. The assembly was celebrated in a solemn way – a solemnity not only for its representation of all peoples and languages of the earth, but also for its achievement of living and planning together ahead the future of the Missions in China. All the participants had to learn mutual acceptance safeguarding the unity of the Church under the leadership of the Pope.²⁹

26 See Cyril J. Law, 7-22.

27 Cf. CMC I, 141; Liu Guo-Peng, 227.

28 Cf. CMC I, 84-87; C. Costantini, *Ultime Foglie*, 60.

29 There were supposed to be 108 members (some were sick or deceased) of the PCS among whom 9 were Chinese. They worked (30 days) from 14 May to 12 June 1924. The discussion sessions were supposed to be kept secret, but one could imagine that the climate was mixed with heated discussion and cold resistance. Opinions were various in discussions, but there was evidently the will to walk together under the guidance of the Pope, of whom Costantini was the Delegate. See Costantini’s letter to the Propaganda Fide dated 14.06.1924 in N233 APF Nuovoa Serie, vol.860, f.529 and CMC I, 161-162.

6. Towards an Ecclesial *Auditus Culturae*

What was learnt? The Mission itself should learn to be a learner, that is, to develop the ability to discern a true Mission from a false one. The individual missionaries might be good, but the Missions in their hands paradoxically might appear bad, as described by Costantini with a Roman proverb: *Senatori boni viri, Senatus autem mala bestia* (Senators are good men, but the Senate is a bad beast).³⁰

Such a paradox might perpetuate, had there been no collective or institutional ability to learn to be true to itself, in the way God wanted it. That was why the document *Maximum Illud* came out timely.

A Mission should be faithful to God and to the people it serves. Pius XI coined this position with his twofold slogan: “*China to the Chinese*”³¹ and “*the Chinese to Christ*”.³²

Missionaries should listen collectively to God who speaks in Christ, the Church, and the Bible (*auditus fidei*), but also to God who speaks in the culture (*auditus culturae*), namely languages, customs, history, arts, architecture, music, education, and so on.

Costantini perceived two historical flows. On the one hand, China was considered a huge culture over the long centuries being given the seeds of His Word (*logoi spermatikoi*), on the other, the Missions in China were regarded as a collective bearer of the Mandate of Christ entrusted to the Church. The PCS, convoked practically by the Pope, constituted a meeting point of the two historical flows, insofar as it has assumed an open attitude of loving, learning, and listening.

As Jesus, revealer of God’s Love, is the centre of the Bible, so He is the point of reference for the Church to discern wheats from weeds in the culture. The weeds are due to sin. The discernment is effective, when both hearings (*auditus fidei – auditus culturae*) are inspired by God’s Love. And thus, the mind is purified from the carnal desires of Mammon. Through the missionary activities of the Church, Jesus, the Incarnate Word, though born in Palestine,

30 Bruno F. Pighin (ed.), *Il Cardinale Celso Costantini. Tra memoria e profezia*. (Venezia: Marcianum Press, 2019), 48.

31 CMC I, 4: *The Pope loves China and wishes it every good. Let China be to the Chinese.*

32 Cf. Pius XI, *Epistola a Mons. Celso Costantini circa la convocazione del primo consiglio plenario della Cina, 20 gennaio 1924: AAS 161(1924): “... Sinenses ad Christum ...”*.

See also its context in Christian Gabrieli, *Un Protagonista tra gli eredi del celeste impero. Celso Costantini delegato apostolico in Cina* (Bologna: EDB, 2015), 105-109.

yet went out of Palestine to different parts of the world, and to all the peoples of whatever race and nation.

The world was created through the eternal Word, whose presence all through the centuries constitute the fundamental intelligibility of the Incarnate Word across all cultures. In other words, due to the presence of the Eternal Word ever since the creation, there have been prepared some cultural elements everywhere in favour of the welcoming of the Incarnate Word, as witnessed by the long standing memories of the Church.³³

The *missio ad gentes*, namely the sending of the Apostles to the world stresses the faith in God's love for the entire humankind through the Incarnate Word, whereas the *diffusio evangelii inter gentes* spreading the Gospel among peoples emphasizes the meeting between faith and culture. Faith is enlightened by the Incarnate Word. Culture is cultivated by human activities, though deviated and contaminated by sin, yet not totally detached from the presence of the Eternal Word. There are good elements in the Culture. That was why Costantini encouraged both missionaries and Chinese clergy to cherish the love of learning and to deepen the knowledge of the Chinese culture.

With this thought in mind, Costantini tried to set the Missions collectively in a humble learning mode through the process of PCS: leaning more, teaching better. *Ecclesia discens*, *Ecclesia docens*. Indeed, as for the learning of the local culture, Matteo Ricci remains a valid example for the missionaries. With great missionary enthusiasm and a natural gift for friendship, Ricci bridged the meeting between Chinese culture and Christian faith.³⁴

The missionaries should develop “familiarity” with the Chinese culture and “interactive sensibility” to lay bare reverently the presence of the Word which lie hidden in the Chinese literatures, traditions, and so on. The teaching of the Gospel to the people (*mission ad gentes*) is from Christ, but the spreading of the Gospel (*diffusio evangelii inter gentes*) among the people should be interactive between the announcers and the hearers.

Given the lack of interactive sensibility among the Missions in China, the *plantatio Ecclesiae* was not yet achieved, nor was the Chinese Hierarchy.

33 At a certain point Costantini claimed, “The great Christian memories are like the lamps that flicker in the profound pagan night. The heart full of hope beats as well, because the Chinese people are naturally Christian [naturaliter christianus]” (CMC I, 207). Though not in a systematic way, Costantini following the Church tradition offered some elements to justify the meeting between Faith and Culture, such as “*Deus Ignotus*”, “*praeparatio evangelica*”, “*logoi spermatikoi*”: CMC I, 132, 160, 276, 278, CMC II 23,29, 64. See also *Induite vos armaturam Dei* (Eph. VI,11). *Ricordi – pensieri – raccomandazioni ai Discepoli del Signore 1939-1942* (Roma, 1942), 133-144.

34 Cf. CMC I, 190-191.

Instead of sowing seed, the missionaries of his time transplanted an adult tree with all its leaves. This was a failure of the missionary work.³⁵ As for a transformation or a reform of Missions in China, Costantini used the term “revolution”.

(In China) we are facing two revolutions: one is the external revolution of China, that agitates to be liberated from Foreign Powers; and another is the internal one of missionary reform, pacific but essential.³⁶

In light of this, the PCS renewed their missionary methodology especially in Book IV: *de Evangelizationis Opere*. The program was: *let China be to the Chinese*. One year later (1925), in China a revolution broke out with the same motto. The PCS, being inspired by the Christian charity, already vowed to do this by having more indigenous bishops, and to defend the legitimate patriotic love of the Chinese. The PCS Fathers recognized the invisible hand of the divine providence arranging everything with powerfulness and sweetness (*fortiter et suaviter*).³⁷

From the PCS, there arose some significant missionary orientations:

- Prioritize the two-fold purpose of the Mission on spreading the Gospel and establishing the Church administered by the local clergy. (PCS 17). In both cases, the method of sowing seeds is preferred to that of transplanting of an adult tree from Europe. The Mission is called *Tien Chiu T'ang* 天主堂 – a hall in which God gathers people – without any national flag, avoiding any hint of colonialism (PCS 25). To maintain the good quality of the “seeds”, the use of Latin is still necessary (PCS 672).
- To provide the opportunities to the foreign missionaries for serious learning (PCS 51, 166) and appreciation (PCS 693-4) of the local language and culture.
- To promote the Local Clergy: formation, office and dignity (PCS 313, 642-8)³⁸
- To set up higher education (PCS 648) in view of the blending of the Gospel and culture, translation work (PCS 36-38),
- To use Chinese architecture for Church building (PCS 453), Chinese music (PCS 525), Chinese arts (PCS 51), Chinese robe for the clergy (PCS 52),
- To stay away from any colonizing outlook of the Mission (*Maximum Illud*).

35 Cf. CMC I, 158; CMC II, p.162; *Ultime foglie*, 14.

36 CMC I, 158.

37 Cf. CMC I, 161-163.

38 Carlo Pioppi, “«E la Santità di N.S. decise che si doveva andare avanti senz’altro». Pio XI e l’Ordinazione dei primi vescovi cinesi, in i Quaderni della Brianza” 180(2014), 303-350.

7. Closing Remarks

Here, I would like to mention two more shiny “dry leaves”. The first demonstrates the importance of inculturation, and the second the spirit of sacrifice.

The first is about the **Chinese Ceremony in the National Funeral of Dr. Sun**.

In 1926, the solemn State Funeral of Dr. Sun Yat-sen (孫中山), the Father of the Modern China, was held in Nanjing. Costantini was invited as the special envoy of the Holy See. Dressed in Chinese robe (as deliberated in the PCS), he stood among the diplomats. Evidently, the traditional Chinese rites were adopted, which had been banned by Pope Clement XI’s decree in 1704 and the ban was consequently kept by the PCS in 1924.

Along the period of controversies,³⁹ there were two opposing parties. Roughly speaking, one would consider these rites **civil** in nature and tolerable, another **superstitious** and intolerable. In Ching dynasty, the Jesuits employed the method of adaptation for their missionary activities. Emperor Kangxi issued an edict of tolerance in 1692 for the freedom of Christianity in China, because of the compatibility between the Chinese Culture and Christian Faith as perceived by Matteo Ricci and his followers. Regarding the ritual disputes, four Jesuits working in the court presented a description of the civil nature of the rites to Emperor Kangxi for his “respectful enlightenment and authoritative teaching”. Emperor Kangxi approved it *in toto* and sent it to Rome as imperial *Rescript* in 1700.⁴⁰ However, from Rome the ban was even tightened. Thus, in 1720 the edict of tolerance was rescinded by Emperor Kangxi, chiefly because it was perceived as an undue interference of another foreign authority (the Pope) upon the Chinese long-standing customs in the name of “superstition”, notwithstanding the imperial *Rescript*.

In 1926, Costantini observed the setting of the State Funeral of Dr. Sun,

39 This article while stressing the audacity of Costantini has no intention to simplify the issues of the Rites Controversy which were intriguingly involved in the course of a century of half, seven popes, two apostolic delegates, the Holy Office, the Propaganda Fide, the missionaries and their congregations or orders; two Chinese emperors and their courts; the kings of Portugal, Spain, and France; the theology faculty of Sorbonne, the Jansenists and so on, as well described by George Minamiki, SJ, in his volume *The Chinese Rites Controversy. From its beginning to Modern Times* (Chicago Loyola University Press 1985).

40 The text was penned by the four Jesuits headed by 閔明我 Claudio Filippo Grimaldi SJ, who was serving the court of Kangxi for Astronomy, Calendar, including hydraulic and artillery engineering. Cf. Han Qi 韓琦:〈奉教天文學家與“禮儀之爭”(1700-1702)〉(The Directorate of Astronomy in the Chinese Rites Controversy) in *Monumenta Serica Monograph Series LI* (2005), ed. by Xiaoxin Wu, 197-209, in particular, 201-202.

and was convinced of its civil nature, he followed the Chinese rites while paying homage to the deceased National Father. His audacious act provoked hostile criticism, but he later wrote a report to Card. Gaspari, the Secretary of State, and obtained his nod.⁴¹

Years later, Costantini drafted the document *Plane Compertum*. In fact, it was published on 8 December 1939 stressing the civil nature of the rites.⁴² Thus, it removed the ban that had negatively influenced on the evangelization in China for over three centuries. On that occasion, Costantini passed very critical remarks on the human fragilities and failures in dealing with the delicate issues of rites, while emphasizing the importance of the missionary principle of *omnia omnibus* and inculturation.⁴³

The second is about the readiness of a **Good Shepherd to die for the flock**.

The news of the death of the two Salesian missionaries, Mgr. Luigi Versiglia e Don Callisto Caravario, shocked and saddened Costantini. On 25 February 1930, in their pastoral journey along River Lin-Kong they were caught by a group of Bolshevik pirates.⁴⁴ Normally it could be solved by paying the “ransom”, but not this time, for the pirates intended to take away the three young girls from among passengers in the boat. Two missionaries fought bravely, but in vain. Both were executed by five gunshots in a bamboo forest close by. Others managed to escape. Three girls were taken away. Humanly speaking, it was completely useless for the missionaries to fight with bare hands against dozen people with guns.⁴⁵

A few years earlier, Mgr. Flammi Belloti, Apostolic Vicar of Nanyang, raised an existential question: without the French Protectorate how could the missionaries survive the unexpected attacks from the bandits? Costantini answered: no Protectorate! What was needed was prudence and trust in God’s

41 Costantini wrote a report to the Holy See and later obtained a “nod” of empathy from Gaspari, the Secretary of State. Cf. CMC II, 105-109; Liu Guo-peng, 282-283.

42 “*Plane compertum est in Orientalium Regionibus nonnullas caeremonias, licet antiquitas cum ethnicis ritibus connexae essent, in praesentiarum, mutatis saeculorum fluxu moribus et animis, civilem tantum servare significationem pietatis in antenatos vel amoris in patriam vel urbanitatis in proximos.*” (The bold is mine), see Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, *Instructio. Circa quasdam caeremonias et iuramentum super ritibus Siensibus*, in *AAS* 32(1940), 24.

43 Cf. Oriolo Marson, *Celso Costantini, la lingua cinese nella liturgia e la questione dei riti cinesi*, in *AA.VV., Da Castions di Zoppola alla Cina. Opere e giorni del Cardinale Celso Costantini 1876-1958*, a cura di F. Metz (Comune di Zoppola, 2008), 247-248.

44 There was a short description of the cruelty of the Bolsheviks through the mouth of a old Russian lady, the wife of an unknown Russian General. See CMC I, 130.

45 Cf. G. Manieri, *Lai-Tau-Tsu. Punta d'aratro. Storia di un evento di ieri per riflettere sull'oggi. La Vicenda di Mons. Versiglia e Don Caravario martiri in Cina* (Roma: Editrice SDB, 2000).

providence, and, in drastic case, even be ready for the Pastor to die for the sheep (*ponere animam pro eis*).⁴⁶

The two Italian missionaries in this dreadful circumstance showed their **love without undue calculation**. In 1990's when I visited *Lai-Tau-Tsui* together with some Salesians, the village people still remembered them.

Costantini had met Versiglia several times, who was a remarkable bishop and fatherly superior of the Mission – a true son of Don Bosco.⁴⁷ Even the then Italian Minister in China, Vittorio Cerruti considered Versiglia a saint and asked Costantini to provide him a sort of “relics” of the martyr.⁴⁸

Thus, the learning attitude of Costantini came from the love of Christ. With *auditus Fidei* and *auditus Culturae*, he tried to stay close as much as possible to the missionaries, and his learning attitude somewhat became gradually contagious to others. The PCS was an important turning point of the missionary revolution, and its after-journey was full of difficulties. That was why, he brought the PCS Fathers to Sheshan and consecrated China to Our Lady,⁴⁹ just as he went to the *Consolata* in Turin before going to China.

At this point allow me to sum up Costantini's insights by returning to the garden where he sank in deep thought about the “dry leaves”.

The imperial park (...) was full of large trees. There was a widespread sense of melancholy and sweet recollection in the place; the silence was disturbed only occasionally by the rustling of leaves due to the passage of some breath of wind. As the Sun set, the golden reflection of light were seen (...) on the autumn leaves of trees. Many other leaves had already fallen to the ground, covering it as if it were a soft shiny yellow carpet.⁵⁰

The imperial park in Beijing represented China where Costantini was preaching the Gospel. The large trees symbolize the people – and he was one of them. The dry leaves indicated the past. They were dry. Would they be of no use at all? Melancholy pointed to grief and anxieties and sweet recollection to joys and hopes. The rustling of the leaves, caused by the breath of wind, whispered the silent presence of the Holy Spirit. The dry leaves flew with the wind,

46 Cf. Letter of Costantini to F. Bellotti, 8 August 1923 from Pechino, in APF – Archive of Propaganda Fide, N.S. 805a, f. 262r. For information, this letter was sent to Van Rossum, 10 August 1923 from Pechino, in APF, N.S. 805a, f. 260r. See also Christian Gabrieli, 95.

47 Cf. CMC II, 167.

48 Cf. Pighin (ed.), *Ritratto*, 270.

49 Cf. CMC, 164-165.

50 *Foglie Secche*, 33

but had a golden gleam under the Sun – the Symbol of Christ. The “golden gleam” was associated with the “utility of inutilities” (in light of Lao-Zhuang philosophy). Some sort of wisdom hidden in every single dry leaf is made shiny by Christ, the Light.

Allow me to borrow some poetic expressions to describe the love and wisdom of Costantini.

一片一片又一片

兩片三片四五片

六片七片八九片

飄在夕陽變金片

One leaf after one leaf, then another leaf

Two leaves, three leaves, four and five leaves,

Six leaves, seven leaves, eight and nine leaves,

All the leaves are turned by the Sun into gold pieces.

Costantini came with the love of Pope XI: *let China be to the Chinese*. Many things he did would be gone with the wind like the falling dry leaves. Some of the leaves indicate his learning attitude: learn to love, to be true, to hear, to heal, to walk together, to design an Ecclesial *Auditus Culturae*.

Evangelization is like weaving a soft golden carpet with one's own life upon which the people can walk towards the immortal splendour of Christ. *May the Chinese be to Christ!*

How many Chinese Participants are there in The First Plenary Council of China in 1924?

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Abstract

The first Apostolic Delegate to China Archbishop Costantini arrived in China in 1922. He called for the first Plenary Council in China almost immediately and it was eventually carried out in Shanghai in 1924. Most people believed that this Plenary Council was for the Chinese but not by the Chinese, as most of the participants were foreign missionaries. At most there were only two Chinese prelates, Msgr. Odoric Cheng (成和德) of Puchi and Msgr. Melchior Sun (孫德楨) of Lihsien, participating the Council. Though it was the fact that foreign bishops made up most of the participating figures, we should not neglect that, owing to the skilful arrangement by Archbishop Costantini, a significant proportion of Chinese participants successfully presented at the Council. Through a detailed reading of the *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*, I found at least nine other Chinese participants in the Council. In this thesis I would like to unveil the real picture of the Plenary Council and introduce the contribution of the participating Chinese priests to our readers. Most of these Chinese participants later became prominent Church leaders in China. So, it is worthwhile to share with my readers a general review of the achievements of these Chinese prelates.

Keywords: Archbishop Costantini, the First Plenary Council 1924,
Chinese prelates in the Council, participants de facto

The Origin of the First Plenary Council of China

The story of the First Plenary Council should start from 1922 when Archbishop Costantini was assigned as the first Apostolic Delegate to China.

In late 1922 Pope Pius XI sent a delegation headed by the very able Archbishop Celso Costantini to China. Rome defined his mission as exclusively religious and educational. However, the Chinese president received him immediately and the apostolic delegate often represented the church at political events. Costantini became the architect of the new Vatican policy toward China.¹

According to Prof. Chen Fang-Chung, however, the story should be traced back a little bit earlier to the promulgation of the famous Papal pastoral letter *Maximum Illud*. Before departing to take up the position of Apostolic Delegate to China, Archbishop Celso Costantini visited the Prefect of Propaganda Fide, Cardinal William Marinus van Rossum. Van Rossum urged Costantini to implement *Maximum Illud* and to call for a national synod as soon as possible.²

Eventually, at the beginning of 1924, His Holiness Pope Pius XI entrusted to Costantini the duty of gathering together at the city of Shanghai all the Vicars and Prefects Apostolic of China and of presiding in His name over the Council. The opening ceremony took place on May 15th of the same year at Siccawei (徐家匯, 上海Shanghai) in the Church of St. Ignatius, one of the largest in China. Some 115 members of the Council, belonging to different nationalities and Religious Orders, who had come from all parts of China, for the first time since the preaching of the Gospel in this land centuries ago, met in a General Assembly. Chinese, both Catholic and non-Catholic, could see with their own eyes the Catholicity of the Church, and understand how she is supernational, transcending racial interests and national boundaries.³

Before the Council, seven regional meetings of vicars and prefect apostolic were held in 1923. The bishops attending the First Plenary Council were French (17), Italian (10), Belgian (5), Spanish (4), Dutch (4) and German (2). Odoric Cheng (成和德) and Melchior Sun (孫德楨), the only two Chinese prefects apostolic in the entire country, attended along with five other prefects

1 E.O. Hanson, *Catholic Politics in China and Korea* (New York: Orbis Books, 1980), 22.

2 Fang-Chung Chen, "Maximum Illud and the May Fourth Movement," *Tripod* 194 (2019): 74-81, here 79.

3 P.M. D'ella, *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China: Being an Outline of the Formation and Growth of The Chinese Catholic Church 1300-1926* (Shanghai: T'uswei Printing Press, 1927), 71-72.

apostolic (監牧) plus representatives for eight absent bishops. Twenty-seven male religious superiors in China participated in the meetings.⁴

Odoricus Tcheng P.A. (成和德) of Puchi, Hepeh (蒲圻, 湖北省), and Melchior Souen P.A. (孫德楨) of Lihsien, Zhili (灃縣, 直隸省, 今河北省) were made perfects apostolic in 1924.⁵ Though the two Chinese prelates were an absolute minority among the dozens of foreign missionary church leaders, their presence carried a strong symbolic meaning that this was a Plenary Council “for” Chinese and, to some extent, “by” Chinese. The following paragraphs are a simple biography of them.

Odoricus Tcheng P.A (成和德) of Puchi, Hepeh

Regarding Bishop Odoricus Tcheng, the Franciscan Order has a lot of material. Fr. Camps and McCloskey mentioned in their book “The Friars Minor in China: 1294-1955” as follows:

On March 2, 1924, Odoric Ch’eng Ho-te (Cheng Hede) of the Stigmata Province (Firenze) was named prefect apostolic of Puqi (Hubei), (蒲圻, 湖北) the first Chinese prefect apostolic in that country.

Born in Laohekow (老河口) (Hubei) in 1873, Odoric made his first studies at Ch’ayuenkow (Chayuangou, 茶園溝) and at the age of 10 he and another possible candidate for the Order went to Italy. Having entered the Order at LaVerna in 1894, he was ordained six years later. After returning to China in 1903 and working as a missionary for four years, he served as vice rector of the Chayuangou seminary for 14 years. He wrote devotional and historical works, translated the Rule of St. Francis into Chinese and composed an Italian grammar book for Chinese people. He had been teaching philosophy at Hubei and Hunan’s Central Seminary for two years when he was appointed prefect apostolic. Two months later, he joined the other prefects and vicars apostolic at the Plenary Council of China in Shanghai. On October 28, 1926, he and five other Chinese priests were ordained bishops by Pope Pius XI in Rome. In 1926, the prefecture apostolic Puqi, entrusted to the Chinese diocesan clergy, had 1,281 Catholics and 3,915 catechumens in a population of 1,200,000. Nine priests served 36 churches and chapels; the prefecture had 18 seminarians.⁶

4 Arnulf Camps, Pat McCloskey, *The Friars Minor in China 1294-1955* (Rome: General Secretariate for Missionary Evangelization, Order of Friars Minor, 1995), 37.

5 D’ella, *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China*, 71.

6 Camps and McCloskey, *The Friars Minor in China 1294-1955*, 34.

Regarding the date of appointment of Msgr. Tcheng, however, “*Catholic Life Weekly*” (《教友生活周刊》) in Taiwan mentions that it was on December 12, 1923. (Catholic Life Weekly, 1986)

According to Fr. Jos Jennes, CICM, Bp. Odoric Ch’eng had translated and rewrote a book in Chinese about Clet and Perboyre. The Chinese name of the book is *Liu Tung erh wei chih-ming chen-fu ho chuan*. (《劉董二位致命神父合傳》) It is a short biography of the Blessed Francis Regis Clet (+ 1820) and John Gabriel Perboyre (+1840), martyrs in China. (Jennes, 1976, p.186) Unfortunately, Bishop Cheng died in Hengyang (Hunan) on November 14, 1928; he was buried in Puqi. (Camps and McCloskey, 1995, p.34)

Melchior Souen P.A. (孫德楨) of Lihsien, Zhili

Msgr Souen’s Chinese is De Zhang (德楨). He was born in Beijing (北京) on November 19, 1869.⁷

He made his studies in the seminary of the same town, where he was ordained Priest on January 24th, 1897. Two years later, on January 24th, 1899, he became a Lazarist. One of his brothers is also a Priest. For twelve years he was a Professor of Latin at the preparatory seminary of Peking, and for about twelve more years he did Missionary work at Niufang (牛房), sixty li (里, about half-kilometer in length) from Peking. While he was there, he was elected Prefect Apostolic of Lihsien (蠡縣) (Chili) on April 15th 1924, without Episcopal character. He was present at the Plenary Council of Shanghai in 1924. He was raised to the Episcopal Dignity, on June 1st, 1926. He has chosen for his motto: “Search into the memory of the fathers”.⁸

According to Josef Chao, Bishop Souen resigned in 1936.⁹ Bishop Souen was staying at the House of the Congregation of St. John the Baptist at Qinghe Town (清河鎮), Beijing City.¹⁰ He moved into Beijing City in 1948.¹¹ and passed away on August 23, 1951.¹²

7 Zhengkun (正鈞) ‘Some stories in the Life of Bishop Melchior Souen (孫主教德楨生平瑣記), in *Catholic Life Weekly* (《教友生活周刊》), published on December 11, 1986.

8 D’ella, *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China*, 81.

9 J. Chao, *A Brief History of The Hierarchy in the Church in China*, 《中國天主教教區劃分及其首長接替年表》(Tainan: The Window Press, 1980), 103.

10 *Hebei Provincial Gazette*, Vol. 68 the *Religious Gazette* (《河北省志·第68卷宗教志》), 1995, 234-235.

11 Zhengkun, Some stories in the Life of Bishop Melchior Souen.

12 Chao, *A Brief History of The Hierarchy in the Church in China*, 140.

Is There Any Other Chinese Participants?

Most people have the impression that there are only two Chinese participants at the Plenary Council. However, the reality is that far more Chinese priests have participated in the Plenary Council.

Actually, Camps and McCloskey mentioned another participant in their book. On page 44 there is a photo and on page 45 is the caption of the photo: OFM Participants at 1924 Plenary Council of Shanghai. No. 14 is Prefect Apostolic Odoric Cheng (Puqi) and No. 25 Aloysius Chen (陳國砥), staff member of Plenary Council.¹³

Camps and McCloskey's remark interested me on the question: How many Chinese staff members were there totally in the Plenary Council? Interestingly, when I reviewed the *Concilium*, the number is very surprising: THERE WERE NINE OTHERS!

Rereading the *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*,¹⁴ we will find that there were quite a few Chinese priests who participated in the Plenary Council. More important is that some of these participants became Church leaders in China afterward. The following is a name list of Chinese priests:

Petrus Tcheng, Dir Foed. Pro E.P. 成玉堂 (山西 洪洞)
Aloysius Tchen, OFM 陳國砥 (山西 汾陽)
Philippus Tchao 趙懷義 (河北 宣化)
Jacobus Tchang (Tchagar) 張雅各 (察哈爾 西灣子)
Josephus Ou, CM 胡若山 (浙江 台州)
Simon Gni 倪西滿 (江蘇 上海)
Lucas Yang, S.J. 楊維時 (江蘇 上海)
Firminus Sen, S.J. 沈錦標 (江蘇 上海)
Josephus Tcheou 周濟世 (河北 保定)

The staff members of the Plenary Council

The *Catalogus Officialium* of the “*Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*” gives us a full account of these participants. Following is the list:

Promotores et iudices querelarum (Investigator and Judges of complaints)

Leo Robert Ass. M.E.	Petrus Tcheng Dr. Foed, pro E.P.
J.B. Debeauvais S.J.	Aloysius Tchen, OFM

¹³ Camps and McCloskey, *The Friars Minor in China 1294-1955*, 45.

¹⁴ *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924* (Zikawei, Shanghai: 1929).

Secretarii (Secretaries)

Georgius Payen S.J.

Philippus Tchao

Joannes Popoli M.E.P.*

Theologi consultores pro praeside

(Theological Consultants for the President)

Renatus Flament, CM

Jacobus Tchang (Tchagar)

Georgius Payen, SJ

Petrus Tcheng.

Mathias Vlaminck, OFM

Josephus Ou, CM

Notarii, testes ad acta

(Shorthand writers of evidence and actions)

C. Hernandez O.P.

Jacobus Tchang (Tchagar)

L. De Smedt, CICBMV

Aloysius Tchen, OFM

Henricus Valtorta MEM

Petrus Tcheng

Lectores actorum (Readers of Acts)

Georgius Weig M. Steyl.

Petrus Tcheng,

Joannes Popoli, MEP

Josephus Ou, CM

Magistri caeremoniarum (Masters of ceremony)

Franciscus Desrumaus CM.,

R.P. Simon Gni

R.P. Josephus Tcheou

Cantores (Singers of Chants)

Morin M.E.

Lucas Yang, S.J.

Samson M.E.

Ostiarrii (Gatekeepers)

Paschalis Le Biboul S.J.

Firminus Sen, S.J.

(*According to the *Concilium*, Joannes Popoli is an MEP, but my friend Fr. Bruno Lepeu cannot find his name in the MEP record. The name sounded Italian, but Fr. Ticozzi confirmed that there is no PIME member on the Council. By the way, we cannot exclude the possibility that in the 1920s, MEP might refer to another religious congregation.)

Are the Nine Chinese Priests staff members only?

The answer is NO. Far more than staff members, some of them are representative *de facto*. During the Plenary Council, five commissions of Bishops were appointed to deal with all matters to be submitted to the Council. Among the important questions to be discussed were Catholic life and practice, recruiting and training of the Native Clergy, the Catholic Press problem, a general Catechism for the whole country etc.¹⁵

Who were they in these five Commissions? The “*Primum Concilium Sinense* Anno 1924” has answers.

Pro Prima Commissione (Libri I et IV)

The First Commission (for the Book One and Book Four)

J. Taccuin, Emm. Prat, Her. Lecroart, Franc. Schraven, Ermeneg. Ricci, Aloys. Janssens, Ant. P. Fourquet; simul cum RR. PP. G. Payen et J. Tchang (張雅各伯) consultoribus:

Pro Secunda Commissione (Libri II et V)

The Second Commission (for the Book Two and Book Five)

Fr. Aguirre, Evr. Ter Lack, Joan. De Vienne, Flam. Bellotti, Joan. Maria Blois, Vinc. Huarte, Maria-Trudo Jans, simul cum RR. PP. G. Flament et Petr. Tcheng (成玉堂) consultoribus:

Pro Tertia Commissione (Libri III)

The Third Commission (for the Book Three)

Jos. Fabregues, Apar. Celest. Ybanez, Ern. Gaspais, Jos. Hoogers, Spada, Hernandez, Debeanvais, simul cum M. Vlamincx et Jos. Ou (胡若山) consultoribus;

Pro Quarta Commissione

(Ad recognoscendos et in ordinem

redigendos Canones a Commissionibus iam conditos)

The Fourth Commission

(for recognition and implementation of

the order of Canon in a Commission of present time Study)

Fr. Geurts, Augustinus Henninghaus, Eugenius Massi, Aloysius Calza, Aloys Van Dyck, Adolphus Rayssac, Aloys. Versighia, Odoricus Techeng (成

¹⁵ D'ella, *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China*, 74.

和德), Melchior Souen (孫德楨), simul cum RR. PP. Superiore Dominicorum de Focehow et RR. PP. Verdier, Ford et Espelage consultoribus:

Pro Quinta Commissione
(Pro Processibus Canonizationis et actibus extra-synodalibus)
The Fifth Commission (for the process of Canonization
and the follow up of the Plenary Council)

E. L. Fatiguet, Joan. Mondaini, Jac. V. Roushouse, Agap. Fiorentini, simul cum RR. PP. Rossi, Casuscelli, Desrumaux et Buddenbrock consultoribus.

Their achievement after the Plenary Council

Most of the Chinese participants became Church leaders in China after the Synod. Five out of the nine Chinese priests became bishops afterwards. One of them even became Archbishop when the Chinese Catholic Hierarchy was established in 1946. Here, the following paragraphs provide a brief personal history of the nine priests.

Petrus Tcheng, Dir Foed. Pro E.P. 成玉堂 (山西, 洪洞)

Not so much information about Msgr. Petrus Tcheng. Even the catholic.com does not carry too much about him. They did not even know the exact year of his birth. In *Revue Catholique*, however, there is a brief report about the newly established Apostolic Prefecture of Hungtung (洪洞) in which Msgr. Tcheng is mentioned.

On June 29, the Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Costantini referred the message from the Propaganda Fide that according to the order of Pope Pius XI, a new diocese (sic) of Hungtung is separated from Lu'an (潞安) Diocese. The first Apostolic Prefect is the headmaster of St. Peter's School Fr. Petrus Tcheng. The new diocese administer 13 counties, that is Hungtung, Zhaocheng (趙城), Fenxi (汾西), Huoxian (霍縣), Lingshi (靈石), Yonghe (永和), Xixian (隰縣), Da'ning (大寧), Puxian (蒲縣), Linfen (臨汾), Xiangling (襄陵), Fushan (浮山), Anze (安澤) and so on.

Msgr. Tcheng with Chinese Name Zhe'san (捷三) and literal name Yutang (玉堂), now is 57 years old. He is a native of Daji Village (大箕村), Jincheng County (晉城). He was ordained in 1903. In 1911 he was appointed principal of the Jiangcheng School in Lu'an County. In 1924 he attended the Plenary Council in Shanghai. In 1928 he was reassigned to Hungtung School. Msgr.

Tcheng is enthusiastic and brave. He always pays special attention to the upbringing of the new generation.¹⁶

According to (<http://www.ywsl.com/bbs/bbsshow.aspx?id=2305>) (2007-7-10), we know that Msgr. Tcheng had compiled a book titled “*The History of Development of the Chinese Catholic Action*” (《中華公教進行會演講史》).

According to “*A Brief History of Catholic Changzhi Diocese*”, Msgr. Tcheng passed away in 1940, but there is no further detail.

Aloysius Tchen, OFM 陳國砥 (山西, 汾陽)

Aloysius Ch'en Kuo-chih/Chen Guozhi was born in 1875 at Anyang (安陽) near Lu'an (潞安) (Shanxi 山西) and entered the Order in 1896 at Dongergou (洞兒溝). Ordained in 1903, he worked as a missionary for nine years and then served as the Chinese secretary to two Italian bishops. Besides teaching Latin and apologetics at the Taiyuan (太原) seminary, he directed the Catholic college in that city.¹⁷

According to Bishop Cheng Shi-guang (成世光) of Tainan, Taiwan, the Catholic college which was called Mingyuan College (明原學校), was the only Catholic middle school in Shanxi at that time.¹⁸

Elected vicar apostolic of Fenyang (汾陽) on May 10, 1926, he received Episcopal consecration from Pope Pius XI in Rome. That year Bishop Chen's vicariate, assigned to the Chinese diocesan clergy, counted 10,460 Catholics and 3,000 catechumens in a population of 1,600,000. Fifteen priests ministered at 88 churches and chapels. Fifteen seminarians gave hope for growth among the clergy.¹⁹ Bishop Chen died in Fenyang on March 10, 1930.²⁰

Philippus Tchao 趙懷義 (河北, 宣化)

The Rt. Rev. Philip Chao 趙懷義 was born in Chengfuse (正福寺), a little village at about fifteen *li* west of Peking, on October 4th, 1880. His father died a martyr during the Boxer rebellion. Two of his brothers are Priests: one died a few months ago at the Yangkiaping Trappist Abbey (楊家坪聖母神樂院), and the other is a Professor at the Preparatory Seminary of Peking. His mother is a

16 New Diocese of Hongdong, Shanxi (「山西洪洞新教區」), in *Revue Catholique* 21(1932): 507-508.

17 Camps and McCloskey, *The Friars Minor in China 1294-1955*, 34.

18 Cheng Shi-guang (成世光), *A Brief History of Bishop Aloysius Chen* (陳主教國砥事略), in *Catholic Life Weekly* (《教友生活周刊》), published on December 11, 1986.

19 Camps and McCloskey, *The Friars Minor in China 1294-1955*, 34.

20 Bishop Chen died in Fenyang on March 10, in *Kung Kao Po*, 1930-4-1:4.

very pious woman. Although she is blind, every day she goes to Mass together with her daughter-in-law. The new Bishop entered the seminary of Peking on November 7th, 1893, and was ordained Priest on February 27th, 1904. For four years, he was a Professor at the Peking Preparatory Seminary; then two years and a half Curate at Sueanhwa; ten years as a Missionary at Sinan; and four years as Director of the Sit'ang Normal School. When Mgr. Costantini came to China, as Apostolic Delegate, he took Father Chao as his Secretary on January 8, 1923. He was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Sueanhwa (宣化, 直隸, Chili) on May 10, 1926. His Episcopal motto is: "I will sacrifice myself to the last breath."²¹

He did what he wrote on the motto. In 1929, the civil war broke out in the area around Hebei and Inner Mongolia. The refugees had nowhere to go but the Catholic cathedral. One night, Bishop Chao walked around the cathedral to see the refugees. He found them so miserable then gave them his big robe. Then he caught a cold instantly. Unfortunately, the cold caused the reactivity of his long illness. He failed to recover and passed away. It was only the eighth month of his Episcopal see.²²

Jacobus Tchang (Tchagar) 張雅各伯 (察哈爾, 西灣子)

Jacobus Tchang was born on March 21 1856, into a Catholic family at Lanyingzi Village (爛營子). His Chinese name is Wei Qi (維祺).²³

In 1872 Jacobus joined the Xiwanzi Minor Seminary and in 1882 he continued his study at Xianxian Seminary.²⁴ In 1886, when he finished his study in Xianxian, he returned to Xiwanzi and taught there.²⁵ He was ordained a priest in 1887.²⁶

Fr. Tchang was one of the pioneers of elaborating the Catholic faith in very simple and easy-understanding vernacular Chinese.²⁷ Fr. Jennes also mentioned Tchang's contribution to the history of catechumen teaching in China.

Now more than in earlier times, the Chinese priests themselves took up

21 D'ella, *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China*, 81.

22 Hua Yi, A Brief History of Bishop Chao Huaiyi, in *Catholic Life Weekly* (《教友生活周刊》), published on December 11, 1986.

23 V. Rondelez, *Vita Patris Jacobi Tchang* (Shanghai: Imprimerie de T'ou-se-we, 1939), 2.

24 Ibid., 3, 8.

25 Ibid., 9.

26 Ibid., 15.

27 Patrick Taveirne, *Han-Mongol Encounters and Missionary Endeavors: A History of Scheut in Ordos (Hetao), 1874-1911* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 307.

their brush, and many have done very meritorious work in this field; among them: Frs. Lawrence Li S.J., Joseph Hsiao S.J., P. Wang C.M., Peter Huang (of Nanking) and Jacques Chang (of Hsiwantzu).²⁸

Jennes credited that “we do think that the following smaller books are very useful as a means of propaganda among the ordinary people. The two books Jennes mentioned are *Chen Chiao ta I* (《真教大益》) and *Chen chiao tsui yao*(《真教撮要》).²⁹ Jennes also mentioned Fr. Jacobus Chang’s first book.

Hsieh cheng li k’ao (1907) (《邪正理考》) by Fr. Jac. Chang. This book is the result of a very long labour and a ripe experience. In five parts it deals with the questions: 1. of the veneration of the true God and of the false gods; 2. of genuine filial piety; 3. of the true religions; 4. of superstitions; 5. of the preaching of the Faith. In general use and equally generally praised, some people find, though, that its tone is too polemical and too sharp (256). It is frequently given as a manual to the students of the catechists schools, and, for that matter the last part contains very good practical hints for the catechists. Written in easily intelligible language, pagans and Christians alike enjoy reading it.³⁰

In 1929 when the Zhining (集寧) Diocese was established and assigned to Chinese priest, Fr. Jacobus Chang preferred to stay in Siwanzi.³¹ On January 31, 1935, Fr. Jacobus Chang passed away peacefully.³²

Josephus Ou, CM 胡若山 (浙江, 台州)

The Rt. Rev. Joseph Hu (Josephus Ou, 胡若山) was born in Tinghai (定海, in Chekiang 浙江), on February 2, 1881. At the age of five he became an orphan and was brought up by the Catholic Missionaries. He did his studies at Tinghai, Ningpo and Kashing, became a Lazarist on November 6, 1906, and was ordained Priest on June 5, 1909. For the following six years, he dedicated himself to missionary service; then, he taught Philosophy and Dogmatic Theology at the Theological Seminary of Ningbo. He assisted at the Plenary Council of Shanghai in 1924, as a Consulting Theologian. He was appointed Vicar

28 Jennes, translated by Albert Van Lierde, *Four Centuries of Catechetics in China* (Taipei: Ming Hua Book Store, 1976), 175-176.

29 Ibid., 177.

30 Ibid., 178-179.

31 Rondelez, *Vita Patris Jacobi Tchang*, 70.

32 Ibid., 112-113.

Apostolic of Taichow(台州) (Chekiang) on July 30, 1926. He has taken for his Episcopal motto: Who is like God?"³³ He was also named as Titular Bishop of Theodosiopolis Armenial.³⁴

In 1949 when the People's Republic of China was established, Bishop Ou still stayed in Taizhou. Unfortunately, he was imprisoned by the government at Hangzhou (杭州) and passed away in 1962.³⁵

Simon Gni 倪西滿

We know even less about Fr. Simon Gni. He did not appear in the group photo of the participants of the Plenary Council.

Fr. Hermand mentioned in his book on the history of Kiang-Nan Mission and Nanking Mission that Gni is a diocesan priest in Shanghai. Gni passed away in 1929 at the age of 89.³⁶ That means Gni was born in 1840. Hermand also mentioned that Gni had been a priest for 52 years.³⁷ It reflects that Gni was ordained in 1877 at the age of 37. Therefore, Gni should be around 82 years old when he was attending the Plenary Council. Again, the issue of age made him impossible to accept other new jobs after the Plenary Council.

Lucas Yang, S.J. 楊維時 (上海)

Compared with Simon Gni, Lucas Yang's life is clearer. His Chinese name is Wei Shi (維時). He was quite famous in the Catholic circle for his publication works. Material about Lucas Yang is, however, not very much.

Jennes mentioned that Yang translated and rewrote the book "*Biographie du Pere Etienne Le Fevre. SJ. (1598-1640)*" into Chinese. The new book then was called *Fang The-wang shen-fu Hsiao chuan* (《方德望神父小傳》).³⁸ Zhang Hua, in his book "*Shanghai Zongjiao Tonglan*", (《上海宗教通覽》) also mentioned that Yang had been the person in charge of *Revue Catholique* 《聖教雜誌》(*Shen Jiao Zhai Zhi*).³⁹

33 D'ella, *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China*, 83.

34 Qian (潛), A Brief History of Bishop Josephus Ou (「胡若山主教事略」), in Catholic Life Weekly (《教友生活周刊》), published on December 11, 1986.

35 Ibid.

36 P. L. Hermand, *Les Etapes de la Mission Du Kiang-Nan 1842-1922 et De La Mission De Nanking 1922-1932* (Shanghai: CHINE, Jesuites- Province de France, 1933), 63.

37 Ibid.

38 Jennes, *Four Centuries of Catechetics in China*, 186.

39 Zhang Hua (張化), *Shanghai Zongjiao Tonglan* (《上海宗教通覽》) (Shanghai: Shi Zhi Publication Group and Shanghai Antique Books Press, 2004), 436.

In 1936, twelve years after the Plenary Council, Fr. Lucas Yang was appointed the Dean of Tangmuqiao Deanery (唐墓橋總本堂區). He was the first Chinese dean there.⁴⁰ Obviously he didn't take up any other important post in this period and it seems a little bit too late for him to be appointed as a dean then.

Firminus Sen, S.J. 沈錦標 (上海)

The Chinese name of Fr. Firminus Sen, S.J. is Sen Jin Bu (沈錦標). This name appeared in a Chinese translation of Costantini's Memoir.⁴¹ Fr. Hermand, mentioned in his book on the history of Kiang-Nan Mission and Nanking Mission that Sen passed away in 1929 at the age of 84.⁴² That means Sen was born in 1845. According to Fang Huo (方豪), however, Sen was six years younger than the famous Jesuit Ma Xiangbo (馬相伯).⁴³ Ma was born in 1840. So Sen might have been born in 1846. Hermand also mentioned that Sen had been in Jesuit for 62 years.⁴⁴ That means that Sen joined the Jesuit in 1867 at the age of 23.

We don't have too much other information about Sen in hand. Lu Xuedi (陸學迪) mentioned in an article in 1996 that Sen original name is Sen Zhaixi, (沈宰熙), and Jin Bu is his literate name (字錦標). He is natively from Shanghai. In 1891, he was assigned the parish priest at Houtang Town, Jiangying County (江陰縣後塍鎮). He returned to Shanghai in 1898.⁴⁵

Based on Hermand's data, Sen was already a 79-year-old man when he attended the Plenary Council. On a picture of the participants of the Plenary Council, he was an old man with very nice grey beard. Obviously, the age was a reason why he was not nominated to be a bishop after the Plenary Council.

From the www.ilgis.cuhk.edu.hk, we know that he had edited a gazette of his family. That is the "The Family Gazette of Catholic Shens in Wuxing" (《吳興沈氏奉教宗譜》), he finished his great work in 1919.⁴⁶

40 Gu Yulu (顧裕祿), "History of Catholicism in Shanghai (「上海天主教史」)," in Yuen Renjie (阮仁澤) and Gao Zhengnong (高振農) ed., *History of Religions in Shanghai* (《上海宗教史》) (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Publication Press, 1992), 658.

41 Celso Costantini, *The Memoir of the Card. Celso Costantini* (Taipei: Congregatio Discipulorum Domini, 1992), 64.

42 Hermand, *Les Etapes de la Mission Du Kiang-Nan 1842-1922*, 63.

43 Fang Hao (方豪), *Biographical History of Catholicism in China* (Vol. III) (《中國天主教史人物傳第三冊》) (Hong Kong: Catholic Truth Society, 1973), 293-294.

44 Hermand, *Les Etapes de la Mission Du Kiang-Nan 1842-1922*, 63.

45 Lu Xiedi (陸學迪), "A Brief History of Bishop Zhu Kaiming's Missionary Work in Jiangyin (朱開敏主教江陰傳教簡史)," *Tripod* 96 (1996): 4-12, here 5.

46 <http://www.ilgis.cuhk.edu.hk/songjiang/family.htm>, accessed on 30 May 2007.

Josephus Tcheou 周濟世 (河北 保定)

Joseph Zhou Ji-shi, C.M. was born on January 23, 1892, and was ordained priest on June 29, 1919.⁴⁷ He was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Baoding, Hebei (河北 保定) on April 5, 1931.⁴⁸ He was then a philosophy professor at the Peking Seminary.⁴⁹ He was consecrated bishop on August 2, 1931 and was also Titular Bishop of Cratia.⁵⁰ Regarding his personal detail, we found a news reporting in *Revue Catholique*, in 1931.

Msgr. Tcheou's Chinese name is Ji-shi (濟世), with literal name En'pu (恩普) and Christian name Josephus. He is a native from the Xiaoguangyang Village (小廣揚村) of the Gaocheng County (藁城縣) in 1891. He joined the Vincentian Fathers at his childhood and was ordained a priest in 1919 at the Shi'men Seminary (in Peking)

In 1946 when the China Catholic Hierarchy was established, Msgr. Tcheou was made Bishop of Baoding. On July 18 of the same year, Bp. Tcheou was moved to Nancheng (南昌), Jiangxi Province (江西省) and was made Archbishop of Nancheng. (Chao, 1980, p. 120, 130) He was imprisoned for many years after 1949 under the Communist regime.⁵¹ He died in 1972.⁵²

Conclusion

Thirty-eight years after the Plenary Council, Pope John XXIII solemnly announced the opening of the Vatican II Council. Some reflections of the Vatican in the current years are very helpful for us to better understand the real meaning of the Plenary Council of China.

People may query whether it is too early to host the Plenary Council. Costantini just arrived in China in 1922, and he hosted the Plenary Council in 1924. Would it be better if he did it later so that they have better preparation?

Obviously, it is a “chicken and egg” question. The later the Council, the

47 gcatholic.com, accessed on 15 June 2007.

48 Chao, *A Brief History of The Hierarchy in the Church in China*, 92.

49 Pope Newly Appoints Chinese Bishop (教宗新任命之中國主教), in *Revue Catholique* (《聖教雜誌》) 20 (1931):304.

50 gcatholic.com, accessed on 15 June 2007.

51 J. Motto, *History of the Catholic Church in China*, (《中國天主教史》), Chinese version translated by Joseph Tarc, Hou, SJ. (Taipei: Guangchi Press, 1992), 153-154.

52 gcatholic.com/dioceses/nanc0.htm

later the promotion of Chinese prelates was possible. No matter how many Chinese priests were there, the question would be still there. On the contrary, instead of waiting for a better environment in the future, the Plenary Council itself created a more mature environment for the development of a real localized Church in China. We can say that the Plenary Council did speed up the process of indigenization of the Catholic Church.

Fr. James Kroeger points out that from the Middle Ages until recent times a characteristic emphasis within Catholicism was on the universal Church. Vatican II, by contrast, emphasized the importance of local Churches.⁵³ From this point of view, we can say that Costantini's prophetic action of elevating local priests as potential local Church leaders in China is a valuable pre-Vatican II attempt to respond to the sign of time in the 20th Century.

It is not easy for Costantini to appoint nine Chinese priests as consultants at the Plenary Council. In fact, his enthusiasm is not welcomed by the foreign missionaries in China.

Right before his arrival in China, on November 30, 1919, the Vatican took the offensive in the question of missionary-Chinese relations. Pope Benedict XV issued the encyclical *Maximum illud*, which deplored the effects of European nationalism on the Catholic Church in China and called for eventual church administration by the Chinese clergy. The missionary clergy in China gave the letter a lukewarm response.⁵⁴

According to Fr. Louis Ha, when Costantini was assigned to China, Pope Pius XI already asked him to take charge of localization efforts, overcome the interference of the French government, and select local clergy to serve as Chinese bishops.⁵⁵

On the opening ceremony on May 15, 1924, Costantini gave a speech that "Among you there are two Chinese Prelates, recently raised to the Dignity of Prefects Apostolic; these, Venerable Brethren, are the fruit of your past labors, the grain of mustard that will grow into a large tree and bring forth abundant fruit in the future. We all share the same unity of Faith and discipline and obey to the same visible Head on earth, our Holy Father the Pope."⁵⁶ Costantini was very clever. He did not mention a single word about the Chinese staff members.

53 James Kroeger, *A Vatican II Journey: Fifty Milestones* (Malati City, Philippines: Liturgical Society of St. Paul, 2012), 48.

54 Hanson, *Catholic Politics in China and Korea*, 22.

55 Louis Ha, "Maximum Illud: An Apostolic Letter of Great Impact on Catholic Missionary Work in China," *Tripod* 194 (2019), 66-73, here 71.

56 D'ella, *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China*, 72.

Obviously, Costantini tried to bypass the foreign missionary prelates who did not want to cooperate with him.

The encouraging act of Pius XI in consecrating six Chinese bishops was, as anticipated, only the beginning of the signification of the Chinese mission. The time was very appropriate, just when Chinese national consciousness had reached its climax in the nineteen-twenties. Gradually, the Chinese were put in command of the vicariates and prefectures, and their staffs of priests were, in some cases, entirely Chinese. In the north, eight ecclesiastical divisions were, at the end of the Second World War, ruled by Chinese in Hopeh, Mongolia and Manchuria. In the east there were five, in Kiangsu and Chekiang; in the west four, in Szechwan and Yunnan; in the centre six, in Shansi, Shensi and Hupeh; in the south four.⁵⁷

Within these nine Chinese priests, five of them had been appointed bishops afterward. Another four older priests did not take up any important positions after the Plenary Council. But their participation itself was a significant move showing that Costantini had tried his best to give honour to Chinese priests.

Garllardetz in his book *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis, and the Renewal of Catholicism*, highlighted Ecclesial Subsidiarity as one of the significant developments of the Vatican II. He defines the principle of ecclesial subsidiarity as follows: The primary responsibility for the realization of individual Christian vocation and the fulfilment of the mission of the local Christian communities lies with those individuals and local communities themselves.⁵⁸ From the magnificent emergence of Chinese clergies into the leading position of Catholic pastoral works in China, we can say that the First Plenary Council in 1924 achieved a wonderful model of ecclesial subsidiarity far before Vatican II.

Obviously, the staff team was a good platform for training potential Church leaders. Some of the foreign missionaries in the staff team, e.g. De Smet and Veltorta were also promoted as bishops.

The Plenary Council, under the wise arrangement of Archbishop Costantini, was a Plenary Council *for* Chinese and *by* Chinese DE JURE et DE FACTO.

⁵⁷ C. Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross-Studies in Missionary History* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), 240-241.

⁵⁸ Richard R. Garllardetz, *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis, and the Renewal of Catholicism* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015), 126.

The First Chinese Council (1924), the *Observations on the Modern Method of Evangelization* (1929) by Blessed Paolo Manna, PIME, and the future of Mission

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Abstract

In the paper figure of Blessed Paolo Manna, PIME General Superior, is compared to the one of the Apostolic Delegate Celso Costantini. Manna wrote his courageous *Observations on the Modern Method of Evangelisation* in 1929, after a two-years missionary journey to East Asia and especially to China, where he met Costantini. The *Observations* were written especially for addressing China mission. In colonial times, Manna voiced the principle that “the Gospel is synonymous with freedom”. He critically wrote about how money negatively impacted China missions. He also advocated the indigenization of the Church, lifting the obligation for learning Latin for Chinese clergy and the admission of married men to the priesthood. I also suggest an agenda for a much-necessary Second Chinese Council today. There is little creative blending among today’s Chinese cultures, the manifestations of the faith and the liturgy. There is a need for theological and pastoral reflections leading to facilitating the faithful to express their faith in a way congenial to their daily lives.

Keywords: Celso Costantini, Paolo Manna, Stefano Borgia, Shanghai Council, First Chinese Council, China Catholic Mission, Inculturation, Interculturality, Mission to China.

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The Council of Shanghai, or better the First Chinese Council (15 May – 12 June 2024), was an important event for the Catholic Church in China. Even today, it is meaningful for China and the universal Church. It opened the way to the Church's indigenization (entrusting its leadership to the local clergy) and inculturation (expressing the faith through local cultural forms).

The First Chinese Council, thanks to the prophetic and resolute work by the Apostolic Delegate Celso Costantini, corrected the critical situation of China Catholicism. According to many critical observers, including Joseph Gabet, Vincent Lebbe, Antoine Cotta and (at a later date) PIME Blessed Paolo Manna, the missions in China seemed as foreign enclaves.

Missionary institutions were slow or even outright contrary to implementing the processes of inculturation and indigenization. Pope Benedict XV issued a warning in 1919: the encyclical *Maximum Illud* was written exactly to correct the situation in China.

Costantini was successful: in 1924, he presided over the First China Council in Shanghai, and in 1926, the first six Chinese bishops were consecrated in Rome. The following year *Furen* Catholic University was founded in Beijing (still existing in Taipei), where Costantini initiated a school for adopting Chinese-style religious iconography.

The first Costantini step to China was in Hong Kong (1922), where he met Bishop Domenico Pozzoni, PIME. Pope Pius XI instructed Costantini to listen to Pozzoni's advises. In fact, PIME missionaries were among the most ready to implement the new course for inculturation: the two Regional seminaries in Chinese architectural style, following the recommendation by Costantini, were built in Kaifeng (Henan) and Hong Kong, both Apostolic Vicariates entrusted to PIME.

Father Paolo Manna was elected PIME Superior just two months after the conclusion of the Council of Shanghai. In 1927, Manna embarked on a long missionary journey to East Asia, which lasted nearly two years. He critically observed the diverse, complex and perplexing realities he encountered – ecclesiastical, missionary, political and cultural – and met with numerous missionaries, church personnel, and knowledgeable persons in the field.

When back, Manna wrote a lengthy report (ninety pages of notes and comments) in which he dared to suggest quite innovative proposals. The document was entitled *Osservazioni sul metodo moderno di evangelizzazione* (Observations on the modern method of evangelization) and was delivered to

Roman Curia, where it was kept for nearly 50 years without any response. It was published for the first time in 1977.²

The critical reading of China Mission by Manna is not too different from Costantini's observations. The two men met in Beijing on August 20, 1928 and spent a lot of time together. In his report, Manna denounces four "chains", as he calls them, that prevent the propagation of Catholic faith in China: Westernism (*Occidentalismo*); reliance (*dipendenza*) on money; protectorate and alliances with foreign governments; failure to promote indigenous clergy and its inadequate formation. His proposals, in his own words, might seem "too bold and reckless." We will see some of them later.

Missionaries as agents of modernity

The criticism to missionaries by Costantini and Manna certainly impresses us. It seems to me that quite a few missionaries, children of their age, suffered from a rather peculiar syndrome. They were willing to give their lives for the Chinese, but not ready to let local clergy take up leadership roles and sit by their side, as brothers with equal dignity.

Present-day criticism of missionary endeavor by post-colonialism and by China's religious policy (stated in various documents and White Papers published in China since 1982) seems to be coherent with Costantini and Manna: Catholicism is a foreign religion brought to China by imperialism.

Yet, China missionary movement in XIX and XX centuries cannot be reduced to an episode of colonialism. Costantini and Manna would never agree that missionaries had a negative impact on Chinese people. The missionaries were, consciously or unconsciously, agents of interculturality and modernity, which greatly benefited the Chinese people fostering the introduction of new scientific and cultural knowledge. With their social, educational and sanitary programs, missionaries promoted the progress of the people, starting with the emancipation of women. The ideals of modernity, such as democracy and science (May Fourth movement, 1919), entered China also thanks to the schools and universities founded by missionaries.

It is not fair to mention only past mistakes, without mentioning the good done by the missionaries and by their Christian collaborators and communities.

2 Giuseppe Buono edited the publication of the unpublished work for EMI (Bologna, 1977, followed by other editions). The direct quotations in this essay come from our translation of this publication. Due to the discursive nature of this contribution, I will omit further page references.

Communities that, in the past, had to bear unfair suffering and persecution. To be part of a universal faith cannot be considered a fault.

What we will try now is, with the same boldness and recklessness claimed by Blessed Manna, critically reading the present situation as he did for the situation of his time, willing to put forward daring ideas to respond to the calls of today.

“The gospel is synonymous with freedom”

Manna is outraged by the damage done by political protection. He calls for freeing Catholicism “from all political protectionism, from all temporal issues.” The French protectorate was a “grave and terrible obstacle.” Far from protecting the mission, it stifled it.

Timoleone Raimondi of the Foreign Missions of Milan, the first Apostolic Vicar of Hong Kong, holds the same view, and after him other missionaries from Milan, including the two Apostolic Vicars in Henan, Bishops Simeone Volonteri and Stefano Scarella.

The missionary, Manna writes, must trust in the strength of the message and not in foreign protection. Manna adds that one must keep away from governments, which have aims contrary to those of missionaries. Indeed, governments fear more than anything else that people will become Christians because “the gospel is synonymous with freedom.” I feel like this phrase by Blessed Manna should be carved in stone, especially in this time of ours that does not like freedom.

Freedom is not an accessory for the lucky few; it is the gift of God, it is the work of Jesus and the sure sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit (where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom 2 Cor 3, 17). Jesus is the author of our freedom, originated in the image and likeness of God in which women and men are created.

Today, the Church in China is not under European powers. There is another kind of nationalism. It aims to pervade, in an invasive and pervasive way, every aspect of the life of the believers. One wonders if this is a new chain, as Mann would put it. The believers in the Gospel are not servants of any power, whether political, economic, military or religious.

Mission is not a “machine that makes Christians”

Manna bitterly observes that not only political power, but money also does more harm than good. He begrudges that money is the ultimate criterion in establishing a mission activity, reduced to a “machine that makes Christians.” Here is another sentence to carve out: mission is not a “machine that makes Christians.”

One becomes Christian to give and not to receive. Manna states that Chinese Christians “must become in everything sufficient to themselves, and be generous.” Jesus sends his missionary disciples out in poverty, relying only on the power of the Word. Paul of Tarsus writes that missionaries communicate a treasure contained in vessels of clay, so that it might appear clear that the message is from God and not from humans. James, we must remember this at least sometimes, says that attachment to money is the root of all evil.

I wonder if these observations are also valid today in China as they are elsewhere in the mission fields. I think Manna’s cry for a genuine evangelical form of missionary activity is extremely relevant nowadays.

A gift is a gift

The reliance of missionary work on money, or on material goods, is a singular distortion of Gospel logic. Manna says that the Church must return to the form of the early Church, and that believers must trust the Gospel for real. After all, mission is a gift, and gratuitousness is the foundational condition for the gift to a gift.

The gift must not fill a need, a deficiency or a defect. It must be free, that is, ‘unnecessary,’ ‘unneeded.’ It must express a surplus of love and offer an unexpected joy, a departure from everyday things. The Christian proclamation has been based too many times on the idea that people lack something, and that Christ is the answer. I don’t think that is the case.

People we meet everyday, even if they are not Christians, are not necessarily unhappy, morally or spiritually lacking something, or looking for something else. Christian faith is, originally, something new and unexpected: the good news that Jesus is alive, is risen. This surprising, beautiful and joyful news changed the lives of his friends and disciples, starting with Mary Magdalene, the very first missionary. Her life changed. The life of the disciples changed.

Our lives changed. We do not belong to a religion that saddens, but to a faith born in Eastern morning from good news of joy. The community of faith is the net of friendship of women and men that rejects live a life of joy and beauty, and rejects all forms of violence, oppression, imposition and proselytizing.

A gift brings joy. In the language of the missionaries at the time of the Council of Shanghai, the non-Christians were defined as ‘unhappy’. These are inadequate and untrue descriptions, yet they illustrate an important point: mission has to do with happiness. If the gospel does not bring some happiness, then it is better to leave people alone.

The gospel in today’s languages

Catholicism, Manna says, must feel “at home in every country, removing any character of exotic import.” He advocates inculturation, even if he does not use this term, which did not exist at the time, but its opposite, namely ‘*Occidentalism*’. The missionary has to reject Occidentalism for “adopting in everything you can, in life, in thought, in art what is good in each country.”

Manna states that Chinese philosophical and religious thought might offer to Christianity in China what Plato and Aristotle gave to early Greek and Latin Christianity. Matteo Ricci had suggested the same. When Manna wrote his report Ricci and the Chinese Rites were still in disgrace and rarely mentioned. In fact, Manna and Costantini spoke about the Chinese Rites Controversy when they met in Beijing in August 1928. As for the formation of future priests, Manna suggests that Latin should not be compulsory for the clergy. *Propaganda Fide*’s secretary Stefano Borgia in 1787 advocated the same (we will return to this).

In 1994, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger suggested to the Asian bishops gathered in Hong Kong to consider the complexity of the relationship between faith and cultures, describing evangelization as inter-culturality. Indeed, the relationship between faith, mission and cultures is made even more difficult today by the complexity of cultures. In the same village, in the same town, in the same community, and in the same family, many cultures coexist. Not only that, post-modern and possibly post-human contexts suggest that various different and ever-changing cultures co-exist within each of us. We are multi-cultural persons.

The gospel has to be announced in cities and societies where many cul-

tures and religions coexist. I particularly wonder how much we know of the cultures and languages of the new generations, in China as all over the world. I am afraid many do not even know the languages the youngsters speak. Certainly, I do not know them.

Missionaries get necessarily “*lost in the translation*”

Thomas Aquinas observed that God speaks to us in human language. He introduced the concept *accomodatio*, a concept that will become important with Erasmus of Rotterdam, Ignatius of Loyola and Matteo Ricci. God has the power to accommodate words to a certain meaning, and we have the same power.³ Speaking in our language, God is understandable to us. We say of the Bible ‘Word of God,’ but in fact, it is a very human, even imperfect word, otherwise it would be incomprehensible to humans.

In Sofia Coppola’s evocative film “Lost in Translation,” set in Japan, an American girl is emotionally overwhelmed by a reality totally different from hers that she experiences while visiting Shinto and Buddhist temples. She loses her comfortable outlook, but only then does she discover another self, or rather enter the depths of her true self. Meeting the other, she understands herself better than before. Out of the cinematographic metaphor: Christians have to get lost in translation, that is, in the transition between their faith and the encounters with new things, new alphabets, and new languages.

Manna was well aware of this: the inability to read reality and the fear of facing new challenges can bring permanent disasters: it is time to speak the Gospel in a way understandable in new contexts and to young people. When Christians miss the challenges of epochal turning points, deleterious consequences might last for centuries.

There is no alternative: proclamation is always a work of translating the message into another language. One must accept the risks of translation, just as God has accepted to translate for us divine word into an imperfect language. This is the inculturation imperative: accepting the necessary and impossible task of translation.

Yet, I believe inculturation and its connatural process of translation are a spontaneous phenomenon. It comes with life. Paradoxically, even those who say they are against it do inculturate. As long as one lives, believes and speaks,

³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I q. I, a. 10.

inculturation happens. The faith is translated and expressed in new languages.

**“The missionary must be foreign,
but the shepherd must be from the people”**

According to Manna, the lack of indigenous clergy and the inadequacy of seminarian formation was a serious failure of Catholic missions.

The issue was not new: the inconclusive discussion about local clergy and its formation had been going on for at least three centuries and, at least in its instructions, Roman curia advocated the necessity of promoting local clergy. Above we mentioned missionaries to China Gabet, Cotta, Lebbe and others (Gabet and Lebbe were quoted by Manna) who, together with Chinese churchmen such as Ma Xiangbo, spoke on the issue but got in trouble with their religious Orders.

Along the same line was Stefano Borgia 150 years earlier, who would become a cardinal and prefect of Propaganda Fide in the time of Pius VII. In 1787, Borgia submitted to the Holy See two extraordinarily innovative memos entitled *On the need to Appoint Chinese Bishops*:⁴ liturgy must be in the Chinese language; local bishops should take leadership roles (“the missionary must be foreign, but the shepherd must be from the people”); Latin should not be imposed as compulsory on candidates for Holy Orders. Proposals that remained unanswered, like those of Manna.

Manna even put forward the boldest possible proposals: there should not be an obligation of celibacy for the Chinese priests (a proposal suggested in 1929!). Candidates should be adults willing to make the gospel the reason for their lives. He proposed the exemplarity of catechists: people with excellent reputations esteemed by their communities. Presbyters could be chosen from them: as, Manna continues, did the apostles.

Manna writes that the obligation of celibacy cannot become the main discriminator for not having a sufficient number of Chinese priests. Celibacy cannot be ranked as more important than the salvation of souls. “If with Latin, and the sciences, and celibacy you manage to keep the gates of heaven closed to

4 “Stefano Borgia’s Two Memorials On the Need to Appoint Chinese Bishops (1787).” In Noël Golvers and Sara Lievens ed., *A Lifelong Dedication to the China Mission. Essays Presented in Honor of Father Jerom Heyndrickx, CICM, on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday and the 25th Anniversary of the F. Verbiest Institute K.U.Leuven. Ferdinand Verbiest Institute*, Leuven Chinese Studies XVII (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2007), 53-84.

so many souls, who gains? Not God, not the church, not souls. Only the devil gains, and truly, one should not work for the devil.”

St. Paul did not found communities and then leave them without leadership and Eucharist and believed in the Spirit who inspires numerous charisms and ministries in the Body of Christ. Paul himself chooses ministers for the communities he founded, from which he departed to continue his itinerant mission.

Today, thousands of communities remain without the grace of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Yet since ancient times, Christians have stated that “we cannot live without Sunday” (Martyrs of Abitene, in today’s Tunis, in 303 a.d.).

“The whole church for the whole world”

Another significant slogan by Manna’s is “the whole church for the whole world.” Manna understood that the destiny of the mission and the church is the same. It is from mission that the church is born, not the other way around. The challenge of today is no longer entrusting leadership to local clergy, but rather a profound reform of the Church’s mission: mission needs to be given back to those to whom it belongs, namely to the baptized, to the holy people of God.

As the name implies, to be a Christian is to be another Christ. Christians are kings, that is, authoritative leaders in the community, in imitation of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Christians are priests, that is, capable of giving their lives to God, in imitation of Christ, the one and only priest. Christians are prophets, that is, missionaries who proclaim the word of the gospel of peace. If the Church acted consequently on this doctrine, which is unassailable because inscribed in the faith of baptismal grace, the Church would already be entirely different and live an entirely different mission in China as in any world nation.

An Agenda for the Second Chinese Council

One hundred years after the Council of Shanghai and Manna’s Observations, there is a need for reform as well. A reform that recognizes the protagonism of the baptized women and men, with their charisms and ministries. The spirit of Synodality today calls for widespread participation by the people of God: “all Church for the whole world”, as Manna stated.

I found it remarkable that the Council of Shanghai was called the “First Chinese Council”. When, then, there will be a Second Chinese Council? There is a great need for it, as there are urgent challenges that call for action by the people of God.

One issue might be about inter-culturality: there is little creative blending among today’s Chinese cultures, the manifestations of the faith and the liturgy. There is a need for theological and pastoral reflections leading to facilitating the faithful to express their faith in a way congenial to their daily lives.

The people of God, i.e. laywomen and men alike, must become more involved in evangelization, as well as in social outreach, charity work, and educational activity. All over the world, young people are afflicted by fragility and emotional instability. This is an issue that needs urgent action, especially since in a country like China, supporting the ageing population is falling on their shoulders. The Church, different faiths and public institutions should collaborate on this critical matter.

Large-scale, rural-to-urban migration has generated a certain gap between rural and urban Catholicism. The former, which tends to be traditional and devotional, often cannot cope with the disorientation generated by moving away from one’s own Catholic village. Christians in the cities are more open to modernity and attentive to the spiritual dimension of life in crowded metropolises—two different sensibilities of living Christian faith must be in dialogue.

The training of lay leaders, religious women and priests has to be in accordance with today’s sensitivities and paying attention to candidates’ emotional and psychological needs.

Innovative initiatives for evangelization should be devised for many Chinese living or travelling abroad, where the opportunities to encounter the Christian faith are much greater.

With this paper, inspired by the legacy of the First Chinese Council, of Celso Costantini and Blessed Paul Manna, I have imagined a mission as, perhaps, they would have imagined as well. A mission of freedom; a mission attentive to the difficult life of the people; a mission of friendship with Jesus; a mission completed by those who are entrusted to it by baptismal grace.

I conclude by turning to Mary Help of Christians, venerated by Chinese Catholics at the Shrine of Sheshan, in Shanghai. To her, we entrust freedom, justice, and peace in China and the world.

The Concilium Sinense 1924 **Its Inspiration and Significance** **for the Catholic Church in Mainland China Today**

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Abstract

Since its initial introduction to China, Catholicism has been preserved through twists and challenges. Historically, the 1924 Shanghai Council stands as a milestone in the progress of Catholicism in China. During this Council, Catholic leaders in China—whether missionaries or native pastors—gathered to thoroughly discuss and implement adherent to Pope Benedict XV's 1919 encyclical "Maximum Illud". This momentous conference had far-reaching implications for the future development of Catholicism. Based on the limited data and research available, this paper will analyse and evaluate the impact and significance of this conference on today's Catholic Church in mainland China from the perspectives of ecclesiology, missiology, and history.

Keywords: Shanghai Council, Catholicism in China, inculturation

Roman Catholicism was first introduced to China during the Yuan Dynasty. And it experienced the arduous exploration of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the tortuous spread and rooting from the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China, and now is the smallest of the five major religious groups in China in the social reality of propaganda and practice of “sinicization of religion” in the field of religious management at all levels.¹

Today, when we think about the inspiration and significance of the 1924 Shanghai Council for the Catholic Church in mainland China, we have to be aware that our precondition and context is that the Church in China indeed recognize herself as a member and a local church of the Universal Church, and Bishop Shen Bin and Fr. Chen Ruiqi of Shanghai diocese, and one faithful member Dr. Tan Lizhu were permitted to go to the Pontifical Urban University as part of the Vatican City State to participate in the centenary of the 1924 Shanghai Council.

Historically speaking, the Shanghai Council” held in 1924, namely the first “National Conference of Bishops”, was a milestone in the growing process of Catholicism in China. And they were the Catholic clergy in China, whether international missionaries or native priests, pooling their wisdom to comprehensively study and implement Pope Benedict XV’s important Apostolic Letter on mission *Maximum Illud* in 1919, resulting in a far-reaching and far-sighted event for the future development of Catholicism in China. From the limited information and materials, and research works available at present, as well as the impact and significance of the conference on the Catholic Church in Chinese mainland today, this paper will try to do some brief reflection, analysis and evaluation from the perspectives of ecclesiology, missiology and history from two dimensions: one on the Church development and the other on the Church’s relation with her outsiders.

The Council was organized and presided by Archbishop Celso Costantini, the first Apostolic delegate to China sent by Pope Pius XI, with the approval of the Propaganda Fide, with the aim of implementing the Apostolic letter of “*Maximum Illud*”, to proclaim the gospel in China, to promote the indigenous clergy, and to push forward indigenization of the Catholic Church, and

1 Sinicization is a new term started to be used officially in 2015, and highlighted in 2016 by the Chinese Communist Party’s general secretary Xi Jinping at the national conference on religious affairs. Zuoan, Wang. Speech at the Opening Ceremony of Insisting on the Direction of Sinicization of Religion in China, 2016, in *Collection of Essays on Insisting on Sinicization of Religion in China*, edited by Religious Research Center of the National Religious Affairs Administration Bureau (Beijing: Religious Culture Publication), 2.

to attempt to eliminate the bias and shortcomings existing in the missionary community at that time, so that the gospel would be more easily accepted by the Chinese people, and the words and deeds of the missionaries would be easily recognized and respected by all the ranks of Chinese people, and the obstacles to the spread of the gospel would be reduced. The Church can grow and expand as much as possible in a good environment.

The most important achievement of this Council was the compilation and approval of a Catholic Chinese Code or Guide or Resolution, known as 1926 The Resolutions and Rules of the First Catholic Council of Bishops in China approved and adopted by the Holy See. The Latin version of the resolution and the rules was first signed by each of the bishops present and then submitted to the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide. Then it began to be rolled out and implemented throughout the country. In the past, the document was only available in Latin. But recently Dr. Leopold Leeb, who teaches the Latin language at the China Renmin University in Beijing, translated the text into Chinese, providing researchers with a rare and valuable contribution. I had the privilege of reading the Chinese version of the document, which gave me some insight into it and deepened my knowledge and understanding of the Shanghai Council.²

The Resolutions and Rules of the First Council is an important document guiding the future life and practice of the Church. From a historical point of view, some people refer to it as the Chinese Catholic Canon Law, modeled on the Catholic Canon Code adopted in 1917. The main points of the document are, but not limited to, the following: formulating policies for evangelization, encouraging establishment of Chinese dioceses administered by Chinese priests, training local clergy, proposing establishment of Catholic hierarchy of Chinese priests, and establishing cultural and educational undertakings and institutions, etc. From the very beginning of the preparatory process, the procedure and content of the Council, were initiated and determined by the Church alone, and was directed and approved by the Apostolic Leadership. The relationship between the Holy See and the missionary field in China was clear and self-evident.

From the point of view of dealing with the external forces and influences of the secular authorities, the Council was confronted with the cultural and political influences of the European missionaries, as well as the positions, attitudes, and civil forces of the local governments of the Republic of China.

² The document was permitted to print out by the Shanghai Catholic Quanci press and circulated among the researchers only.

A hundred years later, in face of the current situation of the Catholic Church in China, when discussing and thinking about inspiration and significance of the 1924 Shanghai Council, we still find out that it is still a very convenient perspective to observe and analyze from the two dimensions: one from the Church internal and the other from the relationship between the Church and the outside factors.

First of all, from the perspective of ecclesiology and history, the Catholic Church in mainland China today underwent earth-shaking shocks along with political revolutions and movements since 1949, reform and opening up, and gradually moved towards its current stable and low profile state with many complicated problems. There are many factors that determine whether the Church will maintain its universal nature, but the most prominent one is whether the primacy of the bishop of Rome is recognized, whether the bishop candidates will be appointed or approved by the Pope, and whether they maintain unity and communion with the universal Church. As we all know, at this point, the mainland Church has taken a big, long crooked road.

Under the guidance of the “Code” adopted by the Shanghai Council in 1924, the older generations of Chinese clergy who were ordained during the Republic of China era and underwent careful selection and serious and meticulous cultivation, and they deeply understood where the Catholic Church in China came from, how to inherit and carry forward the traditions, and live a good life of faith. In 1950s, after intense discussions, serious discernment and reflection, at the inaugural meeting of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association in 1957, the “Resolution of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association” was adopted, stating that “for the sake of the interests of the motherland and the future of the Church, the Chinese Catholic Church must completely change the colonial and semi-colonial state brought to our Church by imperialism in the old Chinese era, exercise independence and self-determination, let the Chinese priests and Catholics run the Church by themselves, maintain purely religious relations with the Vatican and the Holy See on the premise of not violating the interests of the motherland and the dignity of independence, and obey the Pope in the doctrine and canons that should be believed and practiced.”³ However, due to the context of the Cold War between the East and the West, the content of the aforementioned resolution quickly became impossible and unfeasible the following year. Between 1949 and 1955, the 18 candidates for Chinese bishops

3 Resolution of the First National Catholic Patriotic Conference. 1957. In *The Light of the Holy Spirit Shining on the Catholic Church in China*, Collection of the Documents of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association of the Last Fifty Years. Edited by Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and Catholic Bishops' Conference of China (Beijing: Religious Cultural Publication, 2008), 79.

appointed by the Pope were ordained and fully carried out their responsibilities. However, since 1958, the dioceses had elected bishop candidates, although it was difficult to obtain papal approval after initially writing to the Holy See for papal appointment, but the reality of the dioceses urgently wanted bishops. Thus, after much heartfelt pain, the journey of the diocesan election without the appointment or approval of the Pope, the bishopric candidate was started to be consecrated in the country. It is interesting to note that Fr. Dong Guangqing was ordained to be Archbishop of Hankou archdiocese.⁴ And as a result, the Catholic Church in mainland China became an independent Church. Episcopal candidates were elected and consecrated without involvement of Rome, and communications with Rome no long happened. Generally speaking, according to the Canon Law, Catholic bishops who receive ordination and participate in ordination are under the canon law of “self-imposed excommunication”. By the autumn of 2018, before the provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops between China and the Vatican was reached, it was theoretically and publicly stated that 203 bishops were ordained in this way.⁵ But in fact, since the country’s reform and opening up, overseas Catholic friends could come to China to visit these self-elected and self-ordained bishops, some friends began to serve as channel and bridge for domestic bishops to connect with Rome, bringing out the bishops’ confession letters, asking for forgiveness and papal approval, and then bringing back the Pope’s approval to them. Around the mid-90s, there were cases where the Pontifical opinion was consulted before the election of bishopric candidate, and or after the election of a candidate, the Pope’s approval was sought before the consecration was held. At that time, there were so-called “double-faced person” of bishops, referring to these bishops who were recognized by both China’s government and the Vatican.

But on 6 of January 2000, on the feast of Epiphany, in the Capital city of China, the government loudly organized ordination of five bishop candidates without prior papal appointment and approval, which stimulated very serious controversies. Since then, many of the bishops who were elected locally and approved by the Pope were consecrated, while some others were not, especially after the publication of Pope Benedict XVI’s letter to *Catholic bishops, priests, consecrated people and faithful in the People’s Republic of China* in June 2007, there were still some episcopal candidates who accepted the ordination without the approval of the Pope, in defiance of the instructions of the letter and the provisions of the Catholic canon code. Some bishops participated in the conse-

4 *Collection of Articles of Celebration of Episcopal Self-Election and Self-Ordination* (1958). Edited and Printed by Wuhan Catholic Patriotic Association, 3.

5 *Bishops of New China*. Edited by the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference (Beijing: Religious Cultural Publication, 2018), cover page.

cration, which led to an increase in disorder within the Church. This confusion can be seen from the scuffle in the comment section of “Catholic Online” that existed at the time. Many believers and clergy at home and abroad asked the Holy See to publicly clarify the ecclesiastical discipline and give a clear explanation so that the faithful could distinguish between right and wrong and seek the legitimate priests and bishops to receive the sacraments. As a result, the Holy See had to use Article 1382 of the Canon Law to declare them “excommunicated by themselves.” Later, in 2011 and 2012, the Rome Curia publicly announced the excommunication of three illicit bishops by naming them one after another, which is unusual in China’s circumstances. Within the Chinese Church, this move is unprecedented and shocking. In the situation where the country is open and communications convenient, these “illegitimate bishops” and their identity and situation were very embarrassing. In particular, during the large gatherings or meetings of the clergy and the faithful throughout the country or the training programs for “patriotic members”, there were always clergy who succeeded in various ways in avoiding the con-celebration of the Mass with the illegitimate bishops, despite strong persuasion of the administrative officials before the Mass. The message is clear, after all, the sacraments are important for the salvation of souls in the Church, and they are fundamentally different from secular affairs, and they cannot be ambiguous, or replaced.

In view of the impact of these religiously punitive measures within the Church, between 2013 and 2018, when the provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops between China and the Holy See was reached, there were no more cases of bishops being consecrated in the Church in China without the approval of the Pope.⁶ During this period, in addition to ordaining several new bishops, several of the originally ordained bishops without governmental approval also held a public inauguration ceremony, which was required by the government. In short, from 1958 to 2018, after a series of shocks and twists, arduous efforts, and even the price of blood and tears, the desire and pursuit of communion between Chinese bishops and the Pope in the country in 2018 were finally and successfully achieved. Therefore, many people praised signing of the provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops in China in 2018 a milestone. Of course, the small number of bishops who have been ordained in the course of the implementation of the agreement, especially in the past few years, is also puzzling. Moreover, although the bishops of Chinese Church have reached unity and communion with the Pope, and the sacraments of the Church are the same as those of the universal Church, as a local Church of the Universal Catholic Church, the Church in the mainland needs to make more efforts to

6 *Bishops of New China*, 226-232.

be considered a full local Church. For example, not only to send bishops to the Vatican to attend the Synod, but also to implement the relevant measures of the Synod at the local level, and to send representatives to actively participate in the work of the Synod at the continental level. The Church in general is to send bishops to the Vatican for *ad limina* in turn and so on. Finally, in any case, in terms of the historic milestone of the conclusion of the provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops in China, and in terms of the careful and friendly handling of relations with Western representatives and local governments in China during the National Council of Bishops in Shanghai a hundred years ago, I believe that the bishops of that time would have been happy to see the official agreement signed after so many years of efforts by the Popes especially from Pope VI to Pope Francis.

Secondly, from the perspective of missiology, all of the Catholic clergy of the mainland China have long been indigenized, and the pursuit of the Apostolic Letter of the “*Maximum Illud*”, the archbishop Celso Constatini and the participants of the Shanghai Council was realized. It is worthy congratulation. Almost all of today’s bishops in office and priests in mainland China were born after 1949 when P. R. China was established and grew up under the red flag namely under leadership of the Communist Party. Of course, it is an indisputable fact that some dioceses have been vacant for many years, that a very small number of bishops are unable to perform their pastoral duties normally, and that the status of the Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference in the Universal Church and the Canon Law is illicit, and not recognized. These problems were difficult or impossible for the priests attending the Shanghai Council in 1924 to foresee. Looking at the proportion and weight of the Catholic Church in the work of the Chinese government and the Holy See, the differences are incomparable. The Holy See is a religious entity, and it is the essence of the Holy See’s existence and its duty to do a good job in the work of the Universal Church and to coordinate the work of the local Church. The Chinese government, on the other hand, is a secular government that exists and operates under the guidance of the unique atheistic ideology advocated by the Chinese Communist Party, and has to deal with a wide variety of major national economic and cultural work, security, international relations, and world peace projects. Religious work is only one of the many items of the great United Front work of the Party and the State, and Catholic work is a branch of religious work. Because the global Catholic Church has a leadership center, and in the remote small Vatican City-State in Rome, this remote leadership center also has the re-

sponsibility and obligation to lead and regulate the faith, ethics and disciplines of the Catholic Church in Chinese mainland. And this is a basic fact that the Catholic Church in other countries takes for granted, but it is incomprehensible and alien to many mainland Chinese, because there is no such knowledge in the popular education from primary schools to colleges here, so this common sense of the global Catholic Church is estimated to be difficult to be thoroughly understood by the relevant governmental departments for some time to come. This may be the crux of some problems of the Catholic Church on the mainland that are difficult to solve. Although we have long lived in an era of abundant information flow, looking deeper and more detailed, China and the Vatican still need to understand and communicate with each other in order to understand each other more deeply, understand each other's complex management structure and deep needs, and deeply understand what the development of Catholicism in the mainland mean, and seek possible opportunities to solve problems.

The renewal and construction of seminaries and formation of seminarians are important aspects of indigenization and inculturation of the Catholic Church in mainland China, which is also the consensus of the participants of the Shanghai Council listed in the document passed a hundred years ago. At present, it is great that Catholic seminaries across the country have already been localized, and the construction of the nuns' congregations becomes much better. Of course, there are no foreign missionaries in the Chinese Catholic Church today. But if some international professors can be introduced to take short-term temporary classes, as in the 1990s, students can benefit from them, absorbing rich theological and philosophical knowledge and thinking about faith life in multiple dimensions, which may be conducive to the construction and development of the Church.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that in the Internet era of fragmentation, secularization, and economic development as priority, the number of male and female vocations in the mainland Church is also decreasing, especially after entering the 21st century. The number of vocations has fallen off sharply, and the number of vocations in Hebei, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, and Shanxi, which were once rich in the north, has also dropped significantly. Of course, this is also one of the manifestations of the malaise of the worldwide church. How to deal with this reality also challenges that the Bishops' Conference in Beijing and the dioceses across China need to deal with in a realistic way. Some dioceses should strive to seek opportunities for development, cherish the existing possible vocations, and reserve clerical strength for the future of the Church. It is also necessary to understand and study what specific work could be done by

the Catholic leaders in this regard.

As far as other aspects of Catholic inculturation are concerned, in terms of church building forms and decorative arts and styles, the achievements can be seen everywhere. Whether it is urban or rural, judging from the research works of experts on church decoration art and the videos taken by some enthusiastic vloggers, it is not uncommon to see Catholic churches of more than 100 years old, rich in local culture, decoration, and architecture and building materials. Some of the churches in Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan are very well maintained and impressive. It can be seen that the history of localization of Catholicism in China is very long, which is worthy of in-depth study.

Thirdly, we have to mention the challenges and troubles that come with dioceses. As early as 1924, at the Shanghai Council, the participants discussed this issue. To this end, the Council put forward the intention and requested that the division of the dioceses and the provinces be consistent with the administrative divisions of China, and that the name of the diocese and the cathedral be the same as that of the city where it is located, and this would be gradually implemented in the future. In 1946, the 35th year of the Republic of China, the Holy See announced establishment of the Holy hierarchical order in China. This is what is often referred to as the Catholic hierarchy. At that time, there were 20 archdioceses, 79 dioceses, 38 Apostolica Praefecturas, etc. However, after 1980, with implementation of the religious policies and gradual restoration of religious life, diocesan merger occurred here and there, especially in several provinces such as Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Jilin, Anhui, Jiangxi, Guangxi, Hunan and other provinces and autonomous regions. In 1990s, there were nearly one hundred Catholic dioceses recognized by the government. In reality today, the Church in mainland China is faced with the problem of diocese division of the old and new two systems. Corresponding to this is the question of who has the responsibility and authority to establish, divide, merge and name dioceses. Around the year 2000, there was a period of chaos in this aspect, and people involved in the internet were excited back and forth. If the number of dioceses and their jurisdictions could be resolved together with the question of the appointment of bishops, it would undoubtedly be convenient for many dioceses and administrations. Of course, this means that not only does the Pope have the right to appoint or approve episcopal candidates, but the Holy See also has the right to establish, divide or merge dioceses as in other countries. Of course, it takes time for the government and Holy See to deal with it.

As we all know, since the signing of the agreement on the appointment of bishops between China and the Holy See in 2018, it has been a fact that the cas-

es of dioceses accompanying the appointment of bishops in Chinese mainland have been dealt with as it is necessary. For example, the Holy See announced establishment of the Diocese of Chengde and the Diocese of Weifang, which were not recognized in the past, and announced the location of the bishopric seat and the boundaries of the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Weifang. It is conceivable that the news information announced by the Holy See on these two dioceses was reached through consultation with the Chinese side. These uneventful changes fully demonstrate the flexibility of the Chinese and Vatican sides in handling issues and the effectiveness of their case-by-case approaches. Of course, the problem of the division of dioceses in the mainland will not be solved overnight, so it will certainly take long time. First, one has to find out and acknowledge if this is a problem, and secondly, one may gradually decide how to solve it. This requires long-term trust, understanding and consultation.

Finally, the relationship between Chinese Catholic Church and the outside factors in China should be divided into two dimensions: the relationship with ordinary people in society and the relationship with the Party and government management departments. The survey found that, except a few years when there was an online storm of so-called boycotts of the “foreign festival”, the laity and clergy generally felt and believed that their relationship with other ordinary people in society was one of mutual respect and friendship. The religious administrators concerned believed that Catholic clergy studied at school for a long time, had professional knowledge, and were easy to interact and deal with and could cooperate in their work.⁷ On the other hand, because the Party and government management departments are layered from the grass-roots villages, towns, townships, and counties, neighborhood committees, sub-district offices, districts, cities, and provinces, to the central government, and the study and implementation of religious policies and the education and training of patriotism and love for religion must keep up step by step, the relationship that seems simple in form will inevitably appear complicated and overlapping in reality, because a diocese may span several counties and cities, but the management department of a city can only organize the training and education of clergy in the area to which it belongs. Patriotism education, education on sinicization of religion, education on national laws and regulations, education on the four advances(四进教育), education on national security, and so on, just from online reports, it can be seen that the clergy and the backbone(骨干分子) of the faithful have received a lot of education and training. The knowledge of politics, modern history, party history, laws and regulations, and other fields

7 I got the impression after I talked with Catholic clergy of different dioceses and provinces, and religious affairs administrators at local and provincial levels around 2014.

that today's clergy and even the nuns receive is much richer and more extensive than that of the older generations of clergy. Through the popularization and training of courses on sinicization of religion and patriotism and love for religion, they have further deepened their understanding of the ruling Party, and understood that in an open social environment, they should further hold high the banner of loving the country and religion, manage the church well, not only preach to the faithful the truth of believing in God to save souls, but also encourage the faithful to serve the society, help the weak, be a tool for peace, earnestly implement patriotism and love for the religion in their daily lives, and live out the value and significance of the gospel.

In recent years, due to a number of regulations, multiple levels of regulations require that children and adolescents under the age of 18 years old not be allowed to listen and get access to evangelization, nor children and adolescents under the age of 18 years old are permitted to enter places of worship.⁸ And the number of people who can come into churches has shrunk compared to that of a few years ago.⁹ Before such regulations were introduced and strictly enforced, children and young people could be seen in churches, catechisms and pilgrimage sites, accompanied by their parents to Mass. Moreover, the Catholic Church has a tradition of baptizing babies since ancient times, and many children and young people receive the gospel from the family, and from following the elders of the family into the church. Among the five major religious groups on the mainland, this regulation imposes the most significant restrictions on the Catholic Church. In the past, children could be seen in the pictures on various websites run by the Church. Now in the pictures of church activities, one sees only adults. In fact, in the past, the church's website listed numbers of new baptisms every year at Easter and Christmas, and the number of people who joined the church was roughly counted and calculated. In recent years, such statistics have disappeared without a trace. It is safe to estimate that the ban on children and adolescents from religious activities will certainly have a negative impact on the current increase in the number of adherents and on future growth, and the long-term impact of this will require a sustained and comprehensive observation and assessment. For religious communities, the decline in numbers, or the slow increase, is certainly not a positive factor. What does this mean for

8 I navigated the website of Jinritoutiao(今日頭條) on the 15th of June, 2024 and found many regulations concerned there.

9 I talked with the priests in the last two years and got to know that quite a number of congregations were getting smaller in many dioceses and they felt helpless facing such phenomenon because of many reasons including inner immigrations and urbanizations for years.

religious administration offices? I remember that in the 80s and 90s of the last century, some people used the term “religious fever” to describe the phenomenon of increasing the number of Christians, and some even said that the growth of the number of people at that time tended to be exaggerated, especially the figures given by certain overseas institutions or certain people. In recent years, due to the lack of statistics, due to the decline in the number of elderly believers due to the impact of the epidemic, and the continuous decline in the number of new babies, the opportunities for children and young people to receive the faith have plummeted, is it correct to estimate that the number of Catholics is decreasing?¹⁰In recent years, new terms have been frequently invented in the field of mainland economics, such as reducing development, reducing inventory, and so on. Could these new terms be used to describe increase or decrease of the Catholics in China? Thinking about the Shanghai Council a hundred years ago, it is certain that this is not a phenomenon that the participating fathers wanted to see.

In recent years, one may have noticed that a relatively new sentence pattern has become popular in the mainstream discourse field of the mainland, that is, Chinese-style + noun sentence format, such as Chinese-style Marxism and Chinese-style modernization. So can we imitate this format and put forward a Chinese-style Catholic saying? It’s succinct and convenient, and it seems to be accurate.

Finally, this article would like to conclude by quoting the latest Constitution of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of China, published on the Chinese Catholic website on May 12, 2023, to see how the Church defines herself and proclaim herself in the official document.¹¹

Article 3

The purpose of the Conference is to maintain the treasury of faith, to proclaim the Gospel and spread the holy Catholicism through the grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit, on the basis of the Bible and the Holy Tradition, in accordance with the tradition of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church handed down from the Apostles and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council; support

10 The Catholic Church reported that the Church there atrophied. See Catholicism of Liaoning, The Ninth Conference of the Catholic Sinicization Held in Liaoning. 21 June, 2024 at <http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/6ASfu3nZTTRascZqbgNVg>, accessed on 22 June 2024.

11 See Constitution of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of China, <https://www.chinacatholic.cn/ccic/report/2305/0547-1.htm>, accessed on 15 June 2024.

the leadership of the Communist Party of China, support the socialist system, study and implement Xi Jinping thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, adhere to the principle of independence and self-management in political, economic, and ecclesiastical affairs, safeguard national sovereignty and autonomy in ecclesiastical affairs, adhere to the direction of sinicization of Catholicism in our country, and contribute to the preservation of the unification of the motherland, ethnic unity, social harmony, religious harmony, and world peace.

The group abides by the National Constitution, laws, regulations and national policies, practices the core values of socialism, promotes the spirit of patriotism, abides by social morality, and consciously strengthens the construction of integrity and self-discipline. ”

Article 6

The main business of the Conference is:

(1) To study and expound the doctrines and canons that should be believed and practiced. Publish didactic pastoral letters or proclamations according to the needs of pastoral evangelization;

(2) Establish pastoral posts, formulate pastoral regulations, and promote pastoral evangelization. To provide a platform for local churches to exchange pastoral and management experience, and to promote sinicization of pastoral evangelization in churches in China;

(3) In accordance with the traditions of the Church and relevant provisions, in conjunction with the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, guide the election of bishops in the diocese, review and approve candidates for bishops democratically elected by the diocese, and organize and guide the consecration of bishops in the diocese;

(4) To divide and adjust dioceses in consultation with the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association in accordance with the needs of the development of religious affairs in the Catholic Church of the whole country, and to study the allocation of diocesan bishops;

(5) In conjunction with the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, carry out the construction of our nation's Catholic sinification theological thought, deeply excavate the content of doctrines and canons that are conducive to so-

cial harmony, the progress of the times, and healthy civilization, and make interpretations of doctrines and canons that meet the requirements of contemporary China's development and progress, and conform to the excellent traditional Chinese culture;

(6) In accordance with relevant provisions, do a good job in the publication and distribution of church scriptures, and promote Bible study activities;

(7) To cooperate with the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association to publicize and promote the vocation of the Holy Church, and to run a seminary, seminary, and nuns' seminary. Strengthen the re-cultivation of clergy, dedicated people and lay people. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the state, formulate measures for the selection and acceptance of overseas students, and select and accept overseas students;

(8) In conjunction with the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, formulate measures for the designation of clerical personnel. Strengthen the construction of teaching style, strict church discipline, and improve the quality of spiritual practice;

(9) To carry out social service work in conjunction with the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, and to strengthen support and guidance for local church social services and charitable causes;

(10) The Mission represents the Chinese Catholic Church to the outside world, carries out friendly exchanges with the international Catholic community, and promotes exchanges with churches in the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions and the Taiwan region.

The Christianization of China as Precondition for the Sinification of Christianity

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Abstract

Whereas the Shanghai Synod of 1924 repeated the restrictions concerning the participation of Catholics in Chinese traditional ceremonies, the Propaganda Fide circulated an instruction concerning the toleration of some Chinese rites in the year 1939. This document ended the prolonged controversies caused by the Chinese Rites Controversy and has been interpreted as one step ahead on the way of the Sinification of Catholicism in China. Today the one-sided praise the accommodation of Christianity to the Chinese environment needs also to consider the move of China towards Christian standards. This essay argues that it was exactly a profound change on the side of Chinese customs and attitudes which made it possible for the Propaganda Fide to adopt a more tolerant position. The case of the relativization of Chinese traditions and Confucian teachings leads also to considerations concerning Christian and theological studies in China today.

Keywords: Christianization; Sinification; Confucianism; classical languages;
seminary education

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The Shanghai Synod of 1924 did not abolish the old rules and condemnations concerning ancestor tablets in private houses (see the documents of the synod, paragraph 472.1)², ceremonies in honour of the deceased (472.2), rites in honour of Confucius (472.3), genuflections, ketou, and prostrations before tablets or before the coffin of a deceased person, the offerings of cakes, fruits, meat or other food before a coffin or at a tomb and other rites (472.4-8). Thus although there was a new appreciation of Chinese language and culture, the old restrictions for Catholics to participate in certain traditional ceremonies were repeated and preserved.

However, in December 1939 the Propaganda Fide promulgated the *Instructio circa quasdam caeremonias et juramentum super ritibus Sinensibus*,³ which allowed Chinese Catholics the participation in ceremonies in honour of Confucius, and besides this the Propaganda Fide declared that the oath (*juramentum*) of the missionaries to oppose the diverse traditional rites and ceremonies was obsolete. This is often interpreted as a sign that the Curia in Rome changed its mind or that a wrong attitude was finally corrected to a right attitude, namely that Chinese rites should be tolerated. The intention of most essays and studies published on the subject, in China and abroad, seems to be to show that the “adaption to Chinese customs” stance was always right and the “challenge or opposition to Chinese customs” position was always wrong. Or, in other words, there seems to be a fascination with the idea of the “Sini-fication” of Christianity. But why should one not think from the other position and analyze the “Christianization of the Chinese” (in Chinese: *Huaren de Jiduhua*)? Perhaps one can see many developments of the early twentieth century (reform of the school system, education for girls, medical supplies, transportation, modern newspapers, charity institutions etc.) through Christian eyes, not only as a secular “progress of humankind”, but also as the end of idolatry and the relativization of Confucius and his teachings.

1) The End of Idolatry

The instruction of 1939 mentions that “now” (*in praesentiarum*) the old rites “are serving only a civil meaning, they express piety toward the deceased, or patriotism, or politeness toward other people, because the developments of

2 *Primum Concilium Sinense*, 202-203.

3 This declaration was added as an appendix to the documents of the 1924 Synod, see *Primum Concilium Sinense*, Anno 1924, 207-209.

the last centuries have changed customs and minds” (*mutatis saeculorum fluxu moribus et animis, civilem tantum servare significationem pietatis in antenatos vel amoris in patriam vel urbanitatis in proximos*).⁴

This “change of customs and minds” needs some explanation. In earlier times the missionaries perceived the Chinese rites as superstitious idolatry, and Christianity cannot tolerate idolatry. By 1939 these rites were no longer considered as idolatry. What had changed in the first decades of the 20th century, or more exactly, between 1924 and 1939? The instruction of the Propaganda Fide mentions also that the Chinese government (*Sinense gubernium*) had often and repeatedly declared that all citizens can freely choose their religion, and therefore the ceremonies in honour of Confucius “do not happen with an attitude of religious worship” (*non fieri animo tribuendi religiosum cultum*).⁵

The “Chinese government” meant the Nationalist KMT Government which was effectively in power only since the “Northern Expedition” (*Beifa*) in 1927. Since then the atheist, nationalist, and very secular ideology of the KMT promoted modernisation and the destruction of traditional superstitious cults, of temples and old sanctuaries. Some of them were turned into schools, but thousands were destroyed, and millions of old statues were thrown onto the “garbage heap of history”. Missionaries who observed the destruction of old temples and the “fight against the gods” in the traditional cities of Shandong were worried and had a presentiment that this secularist ideology could one day also turn against the churches in China, see for example the interesting report by Fr. Eduard Breitkopf (1885-1950)⁶ about the enthusiastic and violent destruction of the old temples in the city of Yanzhou, Shandong, in the year 1929.

The KMT even wanted to follow the example of Japan and reduce or abolish the Chinese New Year celebrations. On 8 December 1928 a new order instituted the “common calendar” (*gong li*) to be observed from 1 January 1929, and declared the “old calendar” (*jiu li*) to be obsolete. In the winter of that year the people were forbidden to celebrate the traditional Chinese New Year, there were no holidays for that feast and the shops were forbidden to close. The setting off of fire-crackers was suppressed. Even the custom of writing auspicious phrases on paper pasted to the doors (known as *chun-lian*, Spring Festival couplets, New Year scrolls) was forbidden. The order caused considerable confusion and could not be enforced. After three years the KMT government had to admit that only a gradual change could abolish the

4 Ibid., 207.

5 Ibid., 208.

6 Breitkopf, “Kampf gegen die Götter”, 184.

old customs, because the people continued to celebrate their traditional feast. However, the incident shows that the scholars and the party leadership turned away from the traditional feast days, from the popular religions and from the worship of the many Buddhist and Daoist sages, saints, Buddhas, and gods in the village temples. And what about the worship and honors given to Confucius and his teachings?

2) The Historical Relativization of Confucius and His Teachings

In traditional China Confucius was seen as the “authoritative teacher of all ages” (*wan shi shi biao*), and it meant that all intellectuals and mandarins had to learn his sayings ever since the “civil service examination system” was based on the knowledge of the “four books” (*sishu*) and “five classics” (*wu jing*). Thus since the Han Dynasty, and especially since the Tang Dynasty, all Chinese scholarship was centered on these classics, and there was no discussion about learning from other classical books (like the Bible) or learning foreign languages. It was exactly the authority of the classical books of Confucianism which prevented the development of western studies and new sciences in the 17th century, when the Jesuit missionaries had already begun to circulate seminal works in Chinese on geometry, measuring, hydraulics, mechanics, medicine, geography, linguistics, education, law, philosophy, and theology. All these sciences and disciplines could and should have developed, but their development in China was effectively stopped by the phrase “western sciences originate in China” (*xi xue zhong yuan*)⁷, which became the basic attitude toward the imported new knowledge especially after 1644, when the Manchu emperors were afraid that Han-Chinese would turn against them once they were equipped with new knowledge.

In the last year (2023) Jesuit historians wrote about Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688) to commemorate his 400th birthday. Allegedly Verbiest’s voluminous translation of Aristotelian works entitled *Qionglixue* 穷理学 was rejected by Kangxi and by contemporary Chinese scholars, because the Belgian scholar had remarked that Aristotle’s works should be seen as equally important with the works of Confucius, and one day they might even replace Confucius’ books.⁸ This could only be seen as an offence against the authority of Confucius, which means that the Chinese scholars, who cling to the principle

7 The expression “Xixue zhong yuan” was popular since the 1650s, see W. Peterson, “Changing Literati Attitudes Toward New Learning in Astronomy and Mathematics in Early Qing”.

8 This argument was put forward during a discussion at a conference in Beijing in 2018.

of *Xixue zhong yuan*, were not ready to accept the authority of any other books or classical texts aside from their own books. They would not learn foreign languages and would say that all knowledge which is contained in Western books can also be found in Chinese traditional works.

Ironically, it was the figurist⁹ approach of some Jesuit scholars which persuaded the Kangxi Emperor to adopt a cold attitude toward the introduction of western sciences. “The accommodation policy of the Jesuits, particularly that of Bouvet and the French Jesuits, strongly influenced the Kangxi Emperor to accept and spread the theory that ‘Western learning originated in China’. The emperor first enunciated an early form of the Chinese origins theory in 1689-1690 when he personally studied Jesuit science and mathematics with Bouvet, Gerbillon, and others.”¹⁰

The great Manchu emperors Kangxi (in power 1662-1722) and Qianlong (1736-1796) were very successful in containing the western intellectuals (Jesuit scholars) and their knowledge at the court, regarding them as their personal servants and thus precluding the spread of the new sciences to the wider Han-populace. As a consequence none of the new items which the Jesuits intended to bring in, took roots, neither the new painting style of Br. Castiglione nor the technical devices found in the books published by Fr. Schreck. The Confucian orthodoxy continued to keep the male Chinese populace under control through the system of the civil service examinations. This system dominated the minds of the Chinese intellectuals, including the minds of Ma Xiangbo 马相伯 (1840-1939) and Zhao Zichen 赵紫宸 (1888-1980) who were still trained according to the old system.

Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) was a reformer and open to western culture and technology, especially to military technology. He also wanted modern education, and thus he asked the German missionary bishop Johann Baptist Anzer (1851-1903) to create a modern university in Jinan, Shandong, in the year 1901, when boxers were still active in some pockets in Hebei! Yuan’s cooperation with Catholic and Protestant missionaries was encouraging, but the Christian missionaries were finally disappointed, because Yuan demanded that all schools must have statues of Confucius and that all students should be educated to respect the “teacher of all ages”! When Yuan Shikai gained paramount power after 1912 he even planned to institute Confucianism (or Confucian religion, *Kongjiao* 孔教) as a state religion. Probably he wanted to imitate Japan, where

9 Figurism is the theory that symbols or allusions related to Christianity can be found in the classical Confucian works of ancient China. Some Jesuit missionaries, esp. Fr. Bouvet, employed this theory to attract Chinese scholars.

10 Elman, *On Their Own Terms*, 174.

the veneration of the emperor and of great Japanese ancestors at state shrines had become a modern state cult since the Meiji Period (1868-1912). In a time when China's old dynasty had collapsed, what could help to unite the minds and hearts of the Chinese people so that they would not be a fragmented heap of "scattered sand" (*yi pan san sha*), as Sun Yatsen had famously lamented? Sun Yatsen's answer was his nationalist ideology known as *Sanmin zhuyi*, and Yuan Shikai's solution was a national religion: the worship of Confucius.

However, Yuan Shikai's efforts to establish a state religion met the fierce opposition of the younger generation of intellectuals who attacked the old imperial system, and together with the abolishment of the civil service examination system in 1905 the whole tradition of memorizing the Confucian classics and the authority of Confucius disappeared. This must have been a severe shock for the old scholars who thought their tradition which had ruled China for two millennia was irretrievably lost. In fact, Confucianism was not "lost", but only limited or relativized. Confucius became one among many other teachers and "philosophers", such as Laozi, Zhuangzi, and Mozi. His position became less influential, and possibly it was exactly this what some of the missionaries had hoped for in the last centuries.

3) Catholic Reluctance to Relativize Confucius

For Catholicism in China the case of the relativity of Confucius or the limitation of the influence and authority of Confucius is especially instructive, because the seventeenth century saw the publication of a large number (several hundred) books produced and circulated by Jesuit missionaries, and many of these books worked with a kind of harmonization of Confucian expressions, the classical literary style, and Christian ideas. All of them were written in the classical idiom, only Fr. Poirot's Bible translation (completed around 1805) used for the first time the colloquial language.

The harmonization of Confucian texts and Christian theology had the purpose of leading Chinese scholars (and eventually the emperor himself) to the Catholic faith by pointing to certain phrases congenial to Christian worship in the classical books. The most famous representative of this kind of thinking was the French Jesuit Joachim Bouvet (1656-1730) whose *Tianxue benyi* interprets the Chinese classics in a Christian way.¹¹ This so-called "figurism" may have been meaningful at some time, but it was controversial from the

11 See the recent study by Claudia von Collani, *Der ursprüngliche Sinn der Himmelslehre*.

beginning. In a way it “canonized” the classical books of Confucianism and turned them into quasi-sacred scriptures, where “theologoumena” (theologically meaningful expressions) could be found.

Since Jesuit scholars in the early twentieth century praised the harmonizing approach and the achievements of Ricci and his successors, their works became “Catholic classics”, they were reprinted and read, and thus in the KMT era (1927-1949) it was much harder for Chinese Catholics to switch over to the colloquial language (*baihua*) than for the Protestant believers. From essays in the *Revue Catholique* (*Shengjiao zazhi*) one can see that there was a discussion in the 1930s to rewrite and modernize the old Catholic prayers in the classical idiom, but this was not easy. And leading Catholic scholars, for example Xu Zongze (1886-1947), himself a descendant of Xu Guangqi (1562-1633), wrote that it was the task of Catholic theology in China to examine all Catholic teachings, one for one, and to find parallel expressions in the Chinese classics! This may be seen as another form of “*Xixue zhong yuan*” (Western studies have their origins in China), and it seems to have been the guiding principle of the voluminous writings of Bishop Luo Guang (1911-2004) and many other Catholic scholars in Taiwan in the second half of the twentieth century.

The aim of this way of thinking was actually to show that there was a harmony between the teachings of Confucius, but it also can be seen as an effort to emphasize the lasting value of Confucian teachings, thus making Confucius the “authoritative teacher of all ages” (*wan shi shibiao*) again! Today, a century later, we may ask: Is it the task of Catholic theology in China to assiduously examine all possible parallel teachings of Confucianism and Christian tenets? Theologia ancilla Confucii? Is it not rather the task of theology to serve the Word of God and to give helpful answers to the needs of the believers today?

I was struck when I read the study by Liu Xian 刘贤, historian at Renmin University in China, concerning the Collegium Sinicum in Beijing (1938-1951), which aimed to provide higher education for Chinese priests studying at Fu Jen University (the Catholic University of Beijing).¹² The essay analyzes the themes of the theses of the graduates of the Collegium Sinicum from the years 1941 to 1946, such as “*Shanggu ji tian kao*” (Worship of Heaven in Chinese Antiquity), “*Zhongguo gudai zuxian chongbai kao*” (Ancestor Worship in Chinese Antiquity), “*Shisan jing zhong zhi Tiandao guan*” (The View of the Way of Heaven in the Thirteen Scriptures), “*Gudai sheji kao*” (Ancient Worship of Sheji in China) etc. Liu Xian writes that among the graduate studies there were

12 See Liu Xian, “Xueshu chuantong yu Tianzhujiao bentuhua, yi Beijing Fu Jen Daxue Siduo xueyuan wei zhongxin de kaocha”.

“very few themes concerning religion”, and the main interest seemed to be Chinese history, Chinese literature, Chinese culture, Chinese art. All this was doubtlessly also inspired by Chen Yuan (1880-1971) a historian who was interested in the history of Christianity in China and in “Sinification”, which he called “huahua 华化”. However, Chen Yuan did not know western languages well.

The Collegium Sinicum in Beijing was supposed to train Chinese priests so that they could obtain an academic degree which was needed to direct a school in China. Since the Catholic Church ran many schools in China in those days their educational aim was attained. However, it is sad that none of these priests got a thorough theological education in the fields of biblical studies, Church history, moral theology, or canon law, for example. Instead the priests became experts in “*guoxue*” (“national studies”, Sinology), namely in Chinese tradition and culture.¹³

Conclusion

Just like the incipient Christianization of China (the abolishment of the old idols and the relativization of the position of Confucius) was the precondition for the tolerance of certain rites in Catholic circles (the “Sinification of Christianity”) in 1939, so also the incipient Christianization of Chinese scholarship (emerging academic interest in Christian theology and Biblical studies) would be a precondition for the emergence of a creative Chinese theology (“Sino-Chinese Theology”, *Hanyu Shenxue*).

Instead of looking for an alleged harmony between ancient Chinese texts and the Bible, Chinese terms and expressions have to be sufficiently “re-charged” with Christian meanings, as it happened for example with the word *Shangdi*, which is understood in a Christian sense today. This may mean the limitation and neglect of “*guoxue* studies” and the old Chinese textual tradition in favor of a more modern Christian research, which emphasizes the normative value of Hebrew and Greek texts. Consequently these studies should be developed in China.

In 2015 I mentioned to a Jesuit scholar in Beijing that in China there are more dictionaries on the oracle bone inscriptions than Greek-Chinese dictionaries. He replied: “It should be like that. For the Chinese the oracle bones are more important than Greek.” However, I think that for a Christian the study of the Greek New Testament should be given preference over against the study of

13 Liu Xian, *ibid.*, 95.

oracle bones and “guoxue”(Sinological studies) in general. I hope that in the future there will be more Greek dictionaries in China, so as to let more Chinese enjoy the treasures of western antiquity. This will also enrich ancient Chinese characters and words with new meanings. The texts of Confucianism should no longer be “worshipped” as only and last authority, and the Chinese script, literature, and philosophy need a thorough relativizing in order to make the way free for proper respect for the Biblical texts and for a sound theology based on resources from many languages, and not on the principle “Western studies originate in China”. This must be considered in the study plans of Chinese seminaries, where the students and spend perhaps too much time on “Chinese philosophy” and neglect the study of the Biblical languages and other foreign languages, such as English.¹⁴

Drawing a conclusion from my comparisons of the histories of Christianity in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam¹⁵, I can say that wherever the Chinese classics and the Chinese characters were relativized or even abolished, Christianity began to prosper. (Korea and Vietnam have successfully abandoned their former Chinese writing systems.) Perhaps a “Christianization of Chinese scholarship” would have to think along similar lines of polyglossy, the relativization of Chinese sources and the Chinese script, and more respect for non-Chinese scripts, including Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. And perhaps the comparison of the history of Muslims and Christians in China will be more revealing and rewarding than the study of connections between Confucian classics and the Bible. For Chinese Christian scholars Muhammad may be a much more congenial dialogue partner than Confucius, especially because in China Islam adopted Chinese terms and thus created a monotheist theology in Chinese terms.¹⁶

14 I am happy to say that the Seminary of Beijing Diocese located in Houbajia, Beijing, has somehow been able to revive the study of Latin since 2005 when I began to teach there, and in the last decade also the teaching of Greek and Hebrew has become a regular part of the curriculum. I know, however, that in other seminaries in China the study of the classical languages is lamentably neglected, although several young priests capable of teaching them have returned from studies abroad. Obviously, the old reluctance to learn foreign languages is stronger than the new desire to know the original texts of the Bible.

15 See Leeb, *One Dragon, Two Doves. A Comparative History of the Catholic Church in China and in Vietnam*, and Leeb, *Parallel Lives, Congenial Visions. Christian Precursors of Modernity in China and Japan*.

16 Also the dialog between Christianity and Islam is almost totally neglected in China, partly due to the lack of interest in language studies. A proficiency in Hebrew, Arabic, and Chinese would open up many new horizons and manifest similarities in the theological terms used by imams and Catholic priests in China.

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Advance and Retreat: Music and Mission in the Church in China Before and After 1924

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Abstract

Music in the Roman Catholic church in China was addressed in the 1924 conciliar document, but focused more on the regulation of liturgical practices, and the exclusion of inappropriate repertory, than on the indigenization of music. It allowed that “Chinese music may be used in church, as long as it is not profane, and is properly performed in tempo and style”, but excluded vocal music in the languages of foreign missionaries. Thus, it gave with one hand, while taking with the other. There were political and cultural reasons in China and Rome for this choice in 1924, but it did upset aspects of three centuries of experiment and development of thriving musical multi-cultures. Here, I examine in summary music in Christian missionary life in China before 1842, and then after, by which time the *Werkprinzip* had changed the status of Western music as a fine art. I identify questions and problems faced by religious workers, such as were articulated in Shanghai by François Ravary and Hippolyte Basuiau, as well as the Anglican minister, Edward Syle, who praised the work of these Jesuits while struggling with his own. I then discuss the relatively static state of musical affairs in the 1930s, the rise of secular venues for performances of sacred works, and how the last missionary-musicians brought this music into China’s concert world prior to the 1950s.

Keywords: China; Shanghai; 1924 Council; Roman Catholic mission; music; liturgy; inculturation; *Werkprinzip*.

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1

The questions I formulate in this brief study enquire into how the paragraphs emerging from the 1924 Shanghai Council that treat of music fit into a wider history than only that of the Roman Catholic church in China. This wider history concerns the inculturation of Western music in China in general, and in particular sacred music. I pursue this by giving a sketch of this subject from the time of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) onward, followed by a closer look at the period from about 1842 to 1924 (the greater part falling in what has been styled ‘China’s Hidden Century’), and finally to what happened after that up to the 1950s. My survey is of Christian missions in general, and not limited to the Roman Catholic church. This is because the same issues affected most confessions, at least those with liturgical traditions; because there were instances of cross-denominational influence and effect; and because, increasingly in the twentieth century, sacred music was used for concert purposes and presented in non-liturgical settings. These are all important aspect of a larger topic, ‘how Western music became Chinese’, as well as that of cultural, religious, and artistic convergence. In sum, this is part of the history and analysis of how China and Chinese musicians adapted and integrated these European influences, and how Western visitors to China in turn engaged in this process.

I shall leave the comments on music in the 1924 document, which amount to nine paragraphs in Title 17, for other colleagues to discuss. My interest in them lies in the extent to which these paragraphs were progressive in terms of the thrust of the Council to further sinicize the Roman Catholic church, and to what extent were they in some senses regressive. To put it simply, how much on the one hand did these nine paragraphs give, and how much of the pre-1924 practices and experiments did they suppress on the other?

2

The *terminus post quem* for the introduction of Catholic liturgical music in China is usually traced to the papal legate, Giovanni of Montecorvino (1247-1328). He established a boys’ choir for singing the liturgy in what is now Beijing around 1294. This novelty of this choir then attracted the attention of the emperor of the time, Temür Khan. As Giovanni wrote in a letter of 1305,

I have bought one after another forty boys, the sons of pagans, of an age between seven and eleven years, who were as yet learning no religion, and I have baptized them and taught them Latin letters and our rite: and I have

written for them thirty Psalters with Hymnaries and two Breviaries, with which eleven boys now know our Office and maintain the choir services and weekly as [we do] in a convent whether I am present or not. And the lord emperor is greatly delighted with their singing. I strike the bells at all the canonical hours, and perform Divine Office with a congregation of babes and sucklings. But we sing by heart because we have no service-book with musical notes.²

However, this transcultural experiment was lost in the mists of time, and the contiguous history of Western sacred music in China begins with the arrival of Ricci 300 years later. Ricci and his colleagues built on some earlier experiments in the Japan mission. In 1583, when Ricci and Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607) were settled in the city of Zhaoqing (肇慶), we know they had some Western musical instruments which they showed to the considerable interest of their Chinese friends. But whether these instruments were in fact used in the liturgy is not explicitly known, and Ricci never indicated that they were.

In 1599, after a mission was founded in Nanjing by Ricci and Paul Xu Guangqi (徐光啟 1562-1633), Ricci sent his colleague, Lazzaro Cattaneo (1560-1640), back to Macau and commissioned the first pipe organ built in China, completed in 1600. This led to an intermittent practice of missionaries building organs that lasted until the 1860s. Inseparable from its iconic role in Christian worship, the organ interested the literati and the mandarins, but more as an instrument in the scientific sense than the musical. It was after all the most complex mechanical device in Western culture until the time of the Industrial Revolution.³

When Ricci, who died in 1610, was buried at the Zhalan compound outside Beijing on All Saint's Day 1611, his requiem mass was celebrated, according to Nicolas Trigault, "in the most solemn manner possible, with organ and other instruments".⁴ Although we again have no idea what these 'other instruments' were, or what music was utilized, it indicates the extent to which the Jesuits went to reproduce the European presentation of liturgy in China, and to territorialize a physical and acoustic space for these traditions in their mission. However, the lack of specificity about the actual music and the actual instruments used is typical of both this period and the following two hundred

2 A.C. Moule, *Christians in China before the Year 1550*, (London: SPCK, 1930), 173.

3 For more on this topic, see my book *Keys to the Kingdom: A History of the Pipe Organ in China* (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2017), and the website of The Pipe Organ in China Project, www.organen.org.

4 See my article, "The Music of Matteo Ricci's Funeral: History, Context, Meaning," in *Chinese Cross-Currents* 9/2 (April 2012): 104-15 (This is a bilingual English-Chinese publication).

years, and not just in foreign missions. This was due almost entirely to the absence at the time of what is now identified in musicology as the *Werkprinzip*, or work principle.

3

This principle emerged around 1800 at the end of the Classical Era, that is, spanning the professional lifetimes of both Haydn and Beethoven. The *Werkprinzip* assigned to works of music the same autonomous status as artistic creations as those of the fine arts—painting, sculpture, poetry, novels, drama, non-fiction, and so on. These genres had always enjoyed this ontological status in Western art culture. But, prior to the lifetime of Beethoven, there was no parallel canon of musical ‘classics’, nor did there exist even a literature of music such as we recognize today.⁵ J.S. Bach (1685-1750), for example, referred to his weekly cantatas as simply *die Musique*. This indicated their transient and entirely occasional nature in his mind, and he would have been incredulous had anyone told him that they would one day be regarded as the greatest body of evangelical music ever created. But musical works from Beethoven onwards were no longer a mere ‘background’, or strictly utilitarian creations, but were given the status held by the productions of other fine arts. This is to say, that composers became conscious of writing individual musical **works**, rather than just a disposable ‘music’.

Because of the absence of the *Werkprinzip* prior to 1800, almost all attempts to identify precisely what music was used in the China mission before that date have tended, to a greater or lesser extent, to play the ‘Game of Procrustes’, to use the term coined in the 1960s by Canadian psychiatrist Eric Berne. This ‘game’ consists of the manipulation of data to fit a desired hypothesis; and the outcome of this game is usually what is called *optative history*—not history as it was, but as it should have been. Beyond scattered comments, we don’t in fact know just what music was used, only that there was music. For example, Ricci’s famous *Eight Songs* (*xiqin quyi bazhan*), exist today only as poems. Attempts to suggest to what kind of music they may have been sung have been made, and performances based on these theories given. But no musical documentation survives, and these suggestions are all hypothetical. Some of these are frankly more credible than others, for example the

⁵ The classic study of the *Werkprinzip* is Lydia Goehr’s *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

reasonable proposition that they may have been modelled on the Italo-German *madrigali spirituali* of the late sixteenth/early seventeenth centuries.⁶ Other theories and examples of realizations of the *Eight Songs*, a few of which may currently be heard on YouTube, are instructive examples of how the Game of Procrustes is played in China studies today. *Caveat auditor.*

Other instances of absent data on this topic count the following landmarks of early China missions' liturgies:

The now-lost Chinese-language prayer book of Nicolò Longobardo of 1603, preserved in later editions of 1604 and 1665;

A 1710 account of the actions of the Mass, *tianyu zhengyin pu*, found in 1950 at the Bibliotheca Zikawei;

Chinese melodies, probably secular or ritualistic, in music boxes and self-playing organs constructed by among others Tomás Pereira SJ (1646-1708) in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries;

and the 1753 Chinese-language-and-music mass of Sigismondo Meinardi (1713-67), accompanied by Chinese instruments at the Xitang (西堂, West Church) in Beijing around 1754.

Meinardi is particularly interesting, because he is one of the first to introduce a musically indigenized liturgy, but again, just *what* music was utilized, and where it came from, is unknown. When the Xitang, in a renovated state,

was finished [in 1753] to the glory of God, I wanted to have Mass sung on the solemn feasts with Chinese music. In this, God aided me, because a Chinese prince of my acquaintance told me he wanted to help, and gave me some Chinese instruments. Then I went on with the most difficult part: I taught eight boys to sing [the Ordinary of] the Mass, and to Chinese music. The other Christians accompanied on the instruments, and already they have sung Mass on different occasions to a big crowd, more or less as I intended...⁷

Without contemporary data and documentation, attempts to recreate this and earlier practices usually just begin another round of Procrustes. And wheth-

6 Examples of this genre of sacred songs, especially popular among the Jesuits in the early decades of the order, include works published by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1581, Ricci may have known his personally during his studies in Rome), and Orlando di Lasso (1595). I appreciate the helpful remarks made at the conference by my colleague, Prof. Lionel Hong Li-xing, regarding the *madrigali spirituali*.

7 Sigismondo Meinardi, *Il Mondo di Sigismondo: un Druentino nella Cina del XVIII secolo*, ed. Eugenio Menegon (Druento: Comune di Druento. Assessorato alla Cultura, 2019), 164. My translation

er Father Meinardi's mass had any connection with the music and words noted 25 years later by Joseph-Marie Amiot SJ (1718-93) in his *Musique sacrée* (*shengyue jingpu*, 1779), is an interesting question, especially if some scholars are correct in stating that this music was based on *kunqu* operatic repertoire, and used as such as early as Ricci's time.⁸ And this speculation in turn raises the possibility that secular and theatrical music was reused for liturgy, something the 1924 Council interdicted.

4

Not until the mid-nineteenth-century do we know much that is specific about repertoire, and how and what music was used in Catholic and other churches in China. This reflects above all the growing musical and cultural impact in Western societies of the *Werkprinzip*. It was no longer enough to say 'Mass was sung'; it had become important to say something about which mass setting was used, perhaps who had written it or other details of provenance, who sang, and who played the organ or other instruments. Such details were now the rule, rather than the exception. Teaching Chinese students and adults to sing in an unfamiliar Western manner, and to sing this repertoire in (for them) foreign languages, then became major challenges, but also major tools in the slow process of indigenization. In schools, this was also a part of the introduction of Western approaches to education. The last of these parameters, singing in foreign languages such as French within the French missions, was then banned from 1924, where the only remaining choices were Chinese, or Latin.

Another point of difficulty was how, and how much to mix Western liturgical and sacred music with adaptations of Chinese music traditions. For comparison with the Roman Catholic approaches I have mentioned, we learn from the writings of the Anglican/Episcopal missionary, the Rev. Edward W. Syle (1817-90) the nature of the problem in the 1840s and 50s. An Englishman who migrated to the United States, Syle joined the China mission in 1845, and in 1848 had the honor of laying the cornerstone of the Anglican Holy Trinity Church in Shanghai, a site now covered by the 1869 neo-Gothic Holy Trinity Cathedral. Syle was later responsible for the purchase in the 1860s of a pipe organ for the American Episcopal Church of Our Savior in Hongkou.⁹ A very musical priest, Syle confronted the problems most missionaries had in deciding

8 See François Picard, Pierre Marsone, "Le cahier de Musique sacrée du père Amiot, un recueil de prières chantées en chinois du xviii^e siècle", *Sanjiao wenxian* (三教文獻) *Matériaux pour l'étude de la religion chinoise*, 3 (1999): 13-72.

9 See the following link to the page for this organ: <http://organcn.org/organ/sha1883b/>

on the best approach to inculturating Western religious music in a non-Western context. Here is an example of what he wrote, and I quote Syle at length, due to his careful thinking and forward-looking approach to the topic:

The Bishop has devolved on me temporarily the office of organist [at the Church of Our Savior, Hongkou] on Sunday mornings, and, as a consequence, instructing the scholars and our poor communicants to chant the few canticles which have been prepared for our chapel service has occupied me a good deal of late. They take to it with tolerable readiness, but are prone to imitate the drawling manner [sliding between tones] of cantillation that prevails among the Buddhists.

This whole subject of music as connected with Chinese hymnology is one that has begun to exercise the minds of several among the missionaries both here and at the other posts; and by the same token it may be known, that there are a few renewed souls at every station who are asking to be taught some suitable manner in which to sing the praises of the God whom they have learned to know and love. Of course, there are three methods of meeting this want: (1st) to write hymns adapted to Chinese tunes, or (2d) to teach our own tunes, or (3d) to find out some musical *tertium quid* — a modification of either, or a combination of both methods.

As far as my own attempts have gone in pursuing the first method, I have not succeeded in finding any Chinese music which, either in itself or its associations, could be profitably used in the worship. I have found one or two strains, in Chinese war songs and Buddhist hymns, which would furnish the groundwork. It chants somewhat in the Gregorian manner, and I have adapted a very peculiar air to words conveying moral instruction, such as school children might learn with interest (as indeed they do); but I have not met, nor do I expect to meet, with anything that will come up to the requirement of Christian psalmody. The whole style, conception, and manner of the Chinese music is artificial, strained, and ineffective; the notation imperfect, and the whole subject of harmony ignored.

The second method, that of teaching and using our tunes, has been tried in many places, and with most success. As to notation, some have attempted, by reversing the order — that is, reading from right to left — to make the use of our staff and our musical notes easier of acquisition, while others have taught our music *just as it stands*; for which method there are so many good

reasons, that I have settled down upon it myself, after having made trial of every other reasonable plan I could hear of or could invent. I have taught with the five-line staff, and with a three-line staff, and with no staff at all, but using equal squares for the beats of a measure, and numbers, to indicate the intervals [pitches] of the scale.¹⁰ This lost plan is not without its advantages, but the drawbacks are the same as those connected with the employment of a new alphabet, which, though it may be more perfect and more philosophical than the one discarded, cuts off the learner from every access to all that the wisdom of past ages has lodged in that older form.

My conclusion is, therefore, that to teach our music just as we have it is the best thing for us to do; leaving it for the future Christian poets and musicians of China to work out, if desirable, that *tertium quid* before referred to. At present we are cultivating chanting almost exclusively; the Venite, Gloria Patri, and Gloria in Excelsis may be heard at our chapel service in a manner which would remind a stranger of the Christendom from which he is so far distant...¹¹

Prophetic in his vision of an indigenized religious music culture, Syle wrote at the same time that the Jesuits, François Ravary (1823-91), and Léopold Deleuze (1818-65), were building the famous ‘Bamboo Organ of Tungkadoo’ (*dongjiadu*) just a few miles away from his church. Syle was probably one of the many visitors who went out to the workshop at Zikawei in 1856 just to see the organ under construction. He was on good terms with Roman Catholic clergy, and mentions in his journal a visit in June 1856 to the Church of St. Francis Xavier, and a conversation he had there with Mathurin Lemaître SJ (1816-63), who he described as “a Frenchman whom I had met here ten years since”, that is, in 1846. When the organ was finished and dedicated in August 1857, the opening recital (though not Mass) was played by a Mr. Marques, who turns out to have been organist of Holy Trinity Church, and not a Roman Catholic. Here was another thing, a kind of informal ecumenism, all-but forbidden by the 1924 Council.

Also at this time, at the newly-established College of St. Ignatius at Zikawei (*xujiahui*), Ravary and his colleague Hippolyte Basuiou (1824-86) were

10 i.e., similar to present-day *jianpu* and gongche notation. This numerical system had, however, just been invented in Paris about 1844 (based on earlier numerical systems, including one by J.J. Rousseau) by Émile-Joseph-Maurice Chevé (1804-64). It is possible that Syle learned of the Chevé system from the French Jesuits in Shanghai at Dongjiadu and Zikawei, mentioned two paragraphs on in this chapter.

11 E.W. Syle, letter of 26 September 1856, Shanghai. I have taken this from the online research of Australian scholar, Ian Welch, who has done a great service in making Syle’s work available. See *The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, in China and Japan, 1835-1870*.

creating a curriculum for a Sino-European musical education that dwarfs anything that had come before them.¹² It is impossible to mention all their achievements here, so suffice it to point out that from the start of the China mission in the Modern European era, the melding of local and Western musical traditions was actively explored, although explored in what might be characterized as a kind of disorganized depth. Ravary's achievement was to give this a new and more directed lease on life: to organize a bilingual and trilliterate program incorporating Chinese, French, and Latin, the music traditions of the Catholic Church, the paraliturgical music of Second Empire France and Belgium, and as much Chinese music, instruments, and language as he could.

Ravary was a man of astounding modernity in some ways, one sign of which is that his letters mention not only that 'Mass was sung', but give details of the music, usually with the names of the composers. The impact of the *Werkprinzip* is evident throughout Ravary's correspondence, and this is why we know so much more from him (through his published and unpublished writings) than in all the mission correspondence of the previous three centuries.

5

Between 1848 and 1852, Ravary was a 'graduate student' of the Jesuit composer and proto-musicologist, Louis Lambillotte (1797-1855), whom he met at the Jesuit-run College of Brugelette in Belgium (Ravary and Basuiaiu spent their *régence* at this boarding school.) This brings up the matter of his supervisor's *ultramontanism*, which Ravary seems to have shared only in part.¹³ Ultramontanism, with respect to music, was one of the two engines behind the plainchant reform movement that started in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, affecting all liturgical Christian churches. The other was the nascent field of musicology, then in its so-called 'antiquarian' phase.

Lambillotte's view was that a unified chant practice throughout the global Catholic church was a theologically as well as musically-desired goal. This was part of the concept of *unitas*: in music, *unitas* meant one chant practice and one

12 For more on Ravary, Deleuze, Basuiaiu, and their colleagues and their work, see my book *François Ravary SJ and a Sino-European Musical Culture in Nineteenth-Century Shanghai* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: CSP, 2021).

13 In a recent (2020) article, Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans discusses Lambillotte's research into plainchant from the perspective that his Hainault (Walloon) origins left him "foreign to any form of Gallicanism". This may be true; but it does not rule out the obviousness of his ultramontanism, and there arises in consequence an unresolved conflict of ideas here. Also see my forthcoming article on Lambillotte in *Grove Music Online* (the first scholarly article on Louis Lambillotte to be published in a major music encyclopedia.)

musical approach to performance, as opposed to the variety of chant traditions that existed in Catholic Europe before 1903, as well as one notation practice, one language (which was of course Latin for liturgy), and in new sacred music one approach to text setting. Lambillotte's intellectual basis for this was dogmatic and, he claimed, scriptural. For him, this was

The marvelous unity of which Saint Paul spoke, where, after mentioning *one faith, one baptism*, he added *a single language*. For song is also a language, a language so often more expressive than words themselves.¹⁴

Now, I have looked at my Bible, and I am yet to find in Ephesians 4 the phrase, *una lingua*, and consider this to be either a remarkable mistake on Lambillotte's part, or evidence of the Procrustean games which I mentioned earlier. But this was the Ultramontanist agenda in music; and as mentioned in the 1924 conciliar document, the 1903 *Motu proprio* of Pius X finalized this victory by making the reconstructed form of Gregorian chant in the Solesmes style the official and only form allowed. That this was a product of nineteenth-century antiquarian research, and the problems that proceed from that, is a topic too big to go into here. But let me observe that the earliest chants in the *Liber usualis* date only from the eleventh century, long after the death of Gregory the Great (pont. 590-604.) But when the *Motu proprio*, and then the 1924 Council gave this form of plainchant its approval, it did away with all other established European chant practices, in the words of the *Liber usualis*, "*to ensure uniformity in the rendering of the Chant of the Church*".¹⁵

Also altered in 1924 was the practice of singing *cantiques*—religious, often sentimental songs in French and other European languages—which had been of value in education and catechism. Some of these were salvaged through the publication of Chinese translations, and are still sung today in Catholic churches in China. But the exclusion of their original-language texts was also indicative of a shift of musical taste, away from the saccharine pieties of the nineteenth century, and away from anything that smacked of a national origin other than that of Rome. What was left was Latin and Chinese, and this resulted in a kind of stasis described eight years later by Fr. Roger Doherty, a Columban missionary who assisted at St. Francis Xavier at Christmas 1932. He reported that

14 Louis Lambillotte, *De l'Unité dans les chant liturgiques*. (Paris: Poussielgue-Rusand, 1851), 2.

15 *The Liber Usualis with Introduction and Rubrics in English* (Boston, MA: McLaughlin & Reilly Co., 1938), vii.

The [bamboo] organ thunders forth the “*Adeste [fidelis]*”, the same that makes the Christian heart beat faster the world over. It is taken up by a well-trained choir and their Latin words are distinct. Then follows the scarcely less impressive “*Angels we have heard on high*”, sung in Chinese up to the joyous refrain, “*Gloria in excelsis Deo*”...The sermon is preached in Chinese...The “*Puer natus est nobis*” is sung afterwards...¹⁶

Except for the bilingual hymns and the local-language sermon, this could have been any Catholic church in 1932. Uniformity—Lambillotte’s *unité liturgique*—had triumphed, and in consequence of this many of the innovations and experiments of three centuries-plus were largely swept away.

6

So, was there still a forum for development after 1924? In my view, yes, and no. The Roman Catholic church in China, as far as I can tell, turned somewhat inward. The *Kulturkreis* experiments which gripped some seminaries in the 1920s, and proposed that music for liturgy should be rethought and based on local music traditions in mission fields, found almost no foothold in China, except perhaps in the work of Fr. Vincent Lebbe (see my colleague Lionel Hong Li-xing’s paper in this volume for details of this remarkable attempt at the creation of a cross-cultural, Chinese Gregorian-style chant repertoire.) On the contrary, the first reaction in Catholic China to the *Motu proprio* of 1903 was the formation of a *schola cantorum* in Beijing for the study and performance of Gregorian chant in the Solesmes style. This was established by the Vincentians at the Major Seminary at Zhalan around the time of the First World War. Directed by two *Lazaristes*, René-Joseph Flament (1862-1954) and Eugène-Gustave Castel (1885-1959), this was neither a real advance nor a retreat, but an indication of how the new order was being developed laterally after 1903.

Another vector of the dispersion of European sacred music at this time was through performances of sacred works in civic as well as church venues. Father Castel was one of the proponents of this ‘soft power’ approach. Among his efforts was a series of Concerts spirituels in Beijing, most-

16 Roger Doherty SSC, “The Star over Shanghai”, *The Far East* (Maynooth Mission Magazine), 16/3 (March 1933): 11-22.

ly held at the Church of St. Michel in the Legation Quarter. At Easter 1936, this featured a performance of the 1882 oratorio, *La Rédemption*, of Charles Gounod (1818-93), accompanied by a chamber orchestra and organist Thérèse Amouroux. Seminary choirs probably absorbed the energies of some Catholic musicians, who now had reduced flexibility within prescribed forms of music for worship. Choral concerts of sacred music became frequent in pre-1949 China, various choral societies were formed as community ventures, and also in China's universities. Among the most prominent of the latter, was the choir of Yenching (now Beijing) University, of over 100 voices directed by the American missionary-musician, Bliss Wiant.¹⁷ This locally-trained and highly-professional ensemble toured China in the 1930s, singing major choral works at just the same time that Father Castel was promoting the French repertoire and the tradition of the Baroque-era *concert spirituel*.

Another example was the civically-organized Shanghai Choral Society. Founded in 1934, in June of that year they gave the first performance in China of Bach's B Minor Mass, conducted by Mario Paci (1878-1946), renowned conductor of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. In 1935, they then performed Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, conducted by the Russian Jewish refugee composer and conductor, Aaron Avshalomoff (1894-1965), and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, conducted by W.J. Dexter, Secretary of the Shanghai Choral Society, and sub-organist at Holy Trinity Cathedral. This shows, incidentally, that the claim repeatedly made that the China premiere of Bach's great Mass setting was only given in Beijing in 1999 in a performance conducted by the late Thomas Hilbish, is completely untrue.

Continuing to integrate Western religious music in China after 1924 was more a feature of Protestant missions for the most part. There were some concerts and non-liturgical formats available to Catholic choirs and composers, but these were fewer. Secularized performances of religious and liturgical works grew in popularity up to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, and valiant attempts were made to continue this practice during wartime. An outstanding example was the China premiere of the *St. Matthew Passion* of Bach in Fuzhou in 1938, directed by the American missionary and concert pianist, Albert L. Faurot (1914-90). This apparently took place during a Japanese air raid.

All these activities shortly came to a stop outside of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan after October 1949, although efforts were made to continue perfor-

¹⁷ Wiant (1895-1975) was actively involved in the creation of a repertoire of Chinese hymnody using Chinese classical and traditional melodies and Chinese texts. Some of these, including the popular *Father, long before creation*, of which he heard the text sung in Chinese in Beijing around 1932, were later translated into English, and in some cases fitted with standard Western hymn tunes.

mances of sacred music in, or at least parallel to worship. The last successful attempt during this period, as far I have been able to uncover, was a performance of Handel's oratorio *Messiah* at Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai in December 1953, with a choir of 300 voices conducted by the distinguished choral conductor and composer, Ma Geshun (馬革順, 1914-2015).¹⁸

Since the 1980s, sacred music beyond worship has generally been heard in secular formats and venues, and familiarization with this music is now mostly separated from its original purposes. The first organ recital in Mainland China in over 50 years took place at the Beijing Concert Hall in August 1992. Played by Australian organist Robert Boughen on the first pipe organ installed on the Mainland in 50 years, it featured works of Bach, Buxtehude, Daquin, Stanley, Franck, Karg-Elert, Herbert Howells, and Australian composer Colin Brumby. All but one of these were sacred- or liturgical-themed compositions. And I myself was involved in an event where such music was bent to a secular use in September 1999, when I played the organ at the Xinghai Concert Hall in Guangzhou for a mass civil wedding on the stage of the hall of 99 couples, all filmed for China Central Television.

Thus, while celebrated for its 'Chinese turn,' the 1924 Council gave a blessing to the use of indigenous music under some circumstances, which led to some experimentation along the lines of Edward Syle's predicted *tertium quid*, while effectively wiping out many of the transcultural experiments of the past in its sub rosa intention to enforce liturgical unity on the Roman Catholic church world-wide. Prohibitions based on gender hampered development in the musical sense, and the almost-total ban on non-Catholics assisting, for example as organists, also worked against progress. It gave something with one hand, while taking away quite a lot with the other.

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18 Ma was a student of the Austrian organist and conductor, Alois Strassl (1903-76), and later studied at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, during 1948-49. In the 2002-03 academic year, I was fortunate to be the Supervisor of a Master's thesis on 'Gershwin Ma' while he was still alive: Sarah Wai Siu-tsui, *Ma Ge-shun: The Life, Work, and Contributions of a Choral Conductor, Composer, and Teacher*.

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The *Sensus Fidelium* and the Legacy of *Primum Concilium Sinense*

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Abstract

This article explores the legacy of the Shanghai Council concerning the *sensus fidelium* of the faithful. The first part links the Shanghai Council of a century ago with the ongoing Synod of Bishops, suggesting that *sensus fidei* is the foundation of the Synod, and that the Synod shapes and guides *sensus fidei*, providing a theoretical framework for the reflections that follow. The second section discusses the characteristics of faith consciousness in the Shanghai Council and compares the different understandings of the Synod in the two modes of narration. The third section looks at the characteristics of local people's faith consciousness through the ups and downs of the Zhu family in Shanghai, based on Bishop Zhu Kaimin as one of the first national bishops under the impetus of the Shanghai Council, and on the faith narratives of the Zhu family in Zhu Xiang, and discusses them in two sections. The conclusion reminds theologians and ecclesiastical authorities that listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit begins with a sense of faith in the local church and that the Church in mainland China needs to 'walk together' to awaken the *sensus fidei* of the wider community of the faithful.

Keywords: *sensus fidelium*, *Primum Concilium Sinense* (Shanghai Council), synodality, synod, Bishop Zhu Kai-min

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It is an honor to join you in commemorating the first Catholic Council held in Shanghai 100 years ago. I am also grateful for the speeches and essays made by various prelates and colleagues on other occasions such as on conferences in Milan and Rome, reminding us of the many values of commemorating *Primum Concilium Sinense* and stimulating us to reflect deeply on the history and current situation of the Church in China. In addition, I would also like to thank the organizers of this symposium for their dedication.

When preparing the papers for this symposium, I could not help but connect the commemoration of *Primum Concilium Sinense* with the current 16th ordinary session of the Synod of Bishops, and the meanings of the terms “Synodality”, “discernment”, “Communion”, “Participation” and “Discernment” etc. at different stages became clear in my mind. The first part of my article focuses on the relationship between the synod/council and *sensus fidelium*², providing a theoretical framework for this reflection. The second part discusses the epochal and regional characteristics of *sensus fidelium* in the Shanghai Council, primarily through the historical background and the synod’s documents³, while comparing the differential understanding under two distinct narrative modes. The third part explores the characteristics of local express of *sensus fidelium* through the ups and downs of the Shanghai Zhu family. It takes Bishop Zhu Kaimin’s deeds as one of the first batch of six native bishops and the narratives of the Zhu family as the case studies, and discusses this in two sections. In the conclusion, this article attempts to remind theologians and the Magisterium, that commemorating the synod starts with discernment or listening to the *sensus fidelium*.

I. The Synod and *sensu fidelium*

The Holy Spirit works within the Church. The living tradition, passed down from the apostles and handed on to the present, continually enlightens, shapes, and strengthens the *sensus fidei* of God’s people. The Synods of

2 Generally, *sensus fidei* and *sensus fidelium* have been used in different writings as the same meaning, see the discussion in my following text. But literally “*fidei*” is the genitive form of the Latin noun “*fides*”, which means “faith”. When used in the context of “*sensus fidei*”, it refers to “the sense of faith”. The term of “*fidelium*” is the genitive plural form of “*fidelis*”, which means “faithful” or “believers”. In the context of “*sensus fidelium*”, it refers to “the sense of faithful”. Since both of them refer to the communal sense of faith with the slight different denotation as above mentioned, few theologian make the explanation when they used either of the terms. In my paper, I use these two words in the same sense as well, since I discuss and highlight the characteristics of *sensus fidei* of Shanghai Catholic or Chinese Catholic, I use “*sensus fidelium*” as the main term in this paper.

3 *Acta et Decreta, I Concilii Plenarii Sinensis*, 1924, thanks to Prof. Leopold Leeb for the Chinese translation from Latin.

bishops, whether convened at regional or ecumenical Church, have this solemn responsibility to discern. The Shanghai *Primum Concilium Sinense* a century ago and the recent-concluded of 16th Synods of Bishop are both testament to this. Participants in these synods listen to the Holy Spirit and meditated on the Word of God, discerning together the issues and finally reach a consensus to form a synodal document that can be used to guide the solution of various problems of evangelization. The general consensus of faith and morality that is formed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is *sensus fidei*.

The whole body of the faithful. . . cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of faith (*sensus fidei*) on the part of the whole people, when, from the bishops to the last of the faithful, they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals. (CCC, 92)⁴

Sensus Fidei is a supernatural sense of faith given by the Holy Spirit that enables the Church to agree on matters of faith and ethics. This consensus is infallible because it is based on the gift of the Holy Spirit and enables the church to faithfully follow the word of God. This supernatural consciousness of faith also unites the people of God, from bishops, priests, religious, to the faithful of all levels, to experience the faith with discernment and to put it into practice in life (LG 12 and CCC No. 92-93). It can be said that the successful synod is indebted to the *sensus fidei*, which in turn has a shaping effect on the *sensus fidelium*. In other words, the synod is the embodiment of the Church's sense of faith, and both the form of the council and the results of the council contribute to the deepening of this sense of faith.

The *Sensus fidei* is embodied in the *sensus fidelium*, that is, the *sensus fidei* as a whole of the people of God, which presupposes the obedience to the Word, listening to the Holy Spirit, and the submission to the Magisterium of the Church. But as an embodied sense of faith, the *sensus fidelium* is deeply rooted in the people of God within the Church, who have received, understood and lived the word of God.

The nature and location of the *sensus fidei* or *sensus fidelium* must be properly understood. The *sensus fidelium* does not simply mean the majority opinion in a given time or culture, nor is it only a secondary affirmation of what is first taught by the magisterium. The *sensus fidelium* is the *sensus fidei* of the people of God as a whole who are obedient to the Word of God and are led in the ways of faith by their pastors. So the *sensus fidelium* is the sense of

4 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*(2nd edition), 92.

the faith that is deeply rooted in the people of God who receive, understand and live the Word of God in the Church.⁵

After the Second Vatican Council, the ecclesiological concept of Church as the People of God has been well received, and the *sensus fidelium* maintains a delicate balance between the Church's magisterium and the participation of the faithful. However, *Sensus fidei* had sparked in-depth discussions or even controversies among theologians, and has gradually been applied in contemporary theology and Church practice.⁶

It is worth noting the relationship between the *sensus fidelium* and the listening to the Holy Spirit. The *Sensus fidelium* is formed in the process of listening to the Holy Spirit, but it is also the basis of the Church's discernment and consensus, the locus of theology. It is, moreover, a way for the Church to listen to God's people and to observe the Holy Spirit may be leading the Church. Pope Francis, in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* refers to *sensus fidei*, arguing that

as the part of his mysterious love for humanity, God furnishes the totality of the faithful with an instinct of faith – *sensus fidei* – which helps them to discern what is truly of God. The presence of the Spirit gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities, and a wisdom which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively, even when they lack the wherewithal to give them precise expression. (119)

He then uses folk salutation/divination as an example to illustrate the Holy Spirit's "unconditional interaction, pouring out all kinds of riches into the zeal of the people" (124), making it the source of theology (*locus theologicus*), the fruit of the localization of the gospel, the foundation of evangelical power (126).

Pope Benedict XVI expressed a similar view in a public audience in 2010, using two examples from the history of the Church to illustrate the role of *sensus fidei*⁷. He indicates that the beliefs of the Immaculate Conception and

5 International Theological Commission, *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles, and Guidelines*, 34, November 2011, <https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_doc_20111129_tologia-oggi_zh-t.pdf> However, *Sensus Fidei, In the Life of the Church* (2014) explains more. ITC use the term *sensus fidei fidelis* with regard to the instinct of faith of the particular believer, *sensus fidei fidelium* to speak of that of all the faithful, and *sensus fideias* a general term (no.3) See < https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html#Chapter_2:_The_sensus_fidei_fidelis_in_the_personal_life_of_the_believer >.

6 Dario Vitali, "Universitas fidelium in credendo falli nequit (LG 12): Il 'sensus fidelium' al concilio Vaticano II," *Gregorianum*, 86 (2005): 607-628.

7 Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, July 7, 2010. <https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20100707.html>

the Assumption of Mary already existed among the people of God, but theologians turned them into two dogmas only after the totality of the doctrine had become well-explained. In this sense, because of the supernatural sense of faith is endowed by the Holy Spirit, the people of God could have the ability to embrace faith before theologians. In essence, the Pope also pointed out that sometimes the people of God, whether laity or clergy, may have a more accurate “*sensus Fidelium*” than experts and can express beliefs that are part of the message of the Gospel. *Sensus fidelium* can become the foundation and source of theological work, and plays an important role in the development of the church’s doctrine. Of course, *sensus fidelium* involves a very complex process of discernment. A document published by the International Theology Commission, “*Sensus fidei: In the Life of the Church*”,⁸ which explains the history of the Church’s cognition of the “*sensus fidei*” and the criteria of the *sensus fidei*, points out that the *sensus fidei* can only arise in the participation in the life of the Church (88) and the adherence to the Magisterium of the Church (97), the sense of faith has a specific connotation.

Sensus fidelium seems to have a great relevance to the “experience” mentioned in the “bottom-up” theological paradigm in the last century, and experience has become key sources for theological reflection. For example, theologian Schillebeeckx once said, “My theological method is based on the human and Christian experiences. In my theological reflections, I have constantly applied this empirical approach.”⁹ but he also pointed out that experience as a source of theological reflection is not simply self-evident. He has proposed that there are different types of experience, mainly two types, one is “the concrete contemporary human experience “ and the other is the “Judeo-Christian experience”, which needs to be interpreted in a “mutual-critical correlation”¹⁰. In addition, there are more specific experiences such as “experience-to-experience”, “contrast experience” and “abba experience”. Only through the understanding and praxis of faith, the first two kind of experience can transform into the latter¹¹. Thus, *sensus fidelium* is just one kind of experience in which man and God encounter, and the discernment or participation promoted by the 16th Synod are the same method used in the mutual-critical correlation of experi-

8 International Theological Commission, *Sensus Fidei: In the Life of the Church*, 2014.
< https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html#Chapter_2:_The_sensus_fidei_fidelis_in_the_personal_life_of_the_believer>.

9 Schillebeeckx, *I am a Happy Theologian: Conversations with Francesco Strazzari* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 42.

10 Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report on the Books Jesus & Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 51.

11 Schillebeeckx, *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, tr. by N.D.Smith (New York: Seabury, 1974), 99.

ences or story-telling proposed by these theologians.¹²

The *sensus fidelium* is a mysterious bond established among Church members through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, a dynamic consensus in communion guided by the Holy Spirit. Avery Cardinal Dulles once pointed out that Christians are not in agreement on all theological issues; this diversity of opinions within the church reflects the different stages of spiritual growth among believers¹³. In any case, there is a difference between the *sensus fidelium* and public opinion that relies on subjective judgment and social influence; The consensus reached in the *sensus fidei* under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is also different from the artificial consensus reached in secular political negotiation for specific interests¹⁴.

II. The *Sensus Fidelium* in the *Primum Concilium Sinense*

In May of 2024, commemorative activities were held in Milan and Rome to celebrate the centenary of the *Primum Concilium Sinense*. These activities revealed two implicit interweaving narratives. The first narrative focused on the Catholic Church's decolonization efforts, particularly its inculturation in China. The *Primum Concilium Sinense* was a landmark in these efforts, demonstrating the Church's commitment to evangelization rather than colonization. Speeches by Pope Francis, Cardinal Parolin the Secretary of State, and Cardinal Tagle the Prefect of Propaganda Fide, all spoke highly of the vision of the Apostolic Delegate Celso Costantini. Cardinal Costantini clearly articulated that goal of establishing a local Church that respected Chinese culture and integrated deeply into Chinese society, avoiding becoming a representative of foreign powers. He stressed the importance of cultural adaptation in missionary work and advocated for reducing reliance on foreign missionaries by training native clergy and ordaining Chinese bishops. By establishing a direct dialogue with the Chinese government, the Church sought to resolve issues of protectorate. These strategies not only ensured that the Church's missionary work aligned with China's national interests and cultural context, but also maintain

12 This is exactly what Cardinal Tagle said in his speech "Who will tell the story of Jesus" at the opening of the International Symposium on the 400th Anniversary of the Mission. (Agenzia fides, Nov17, 2022), see < https://www.fides.org/en/news/73058-VATICAN_Who_will_tell_the_story_of_Jesus_Cardinal_Tagle_s_relevant_question_opens_the_conference_of_the_400th_anniversary_of_Propaganda_Fide>.

13 See Paul G. Monson, "Sentire cum concilio: Vatican II and the *Sensus fidelium* in the Thought of Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.," *Gregorianum* 95 (2014): 39-58.

14 See G.Martin, "Poulsom, Schillebeeckx and the *Sensus Fidelium*, *New Blackfriars*," 98(2017): 203-217, and Dario Vitali, "*Sensus fidelium* and Public Opinion in the Church," *Gregorianum* 82(2001): 689-717.

the Church's independence and autonomy within Chinese society.

This clear *Sensus fidei* was also reflected in the *Acta et Decreta*, the documents of Shanghai Council. The first section on *Normae generales* explicitly stated: The purpose of any mission is to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to prepare a Church composed of native clergy (art.17). It further required missionaries to renounce and distance themselves from improper worldly concerns and from all political affairs (art.22), and to avoid disdain for local customs. These principles were reinforced in specific formulation in the second on *De personis et officiis*, in the third part on *De Rebus* and the fourth part on *De evangelizationis opere* and so on. Interestingly, Archbishop Savio Hon Tai-Fai pointed out that the most significant and unique contribution of the *Primum Concilium Sinense* was not the *Acta et Decreta*, but rather the discernment and awakening of the *sensus fidei* through the mechanism of “listening”. This outcome of the conference was the result of intense reflection and debate among the “young” and “old” missionaries after enduring painful conflicts.¹⁵

In discussing the *Primum Concilium Sinense*, it is necessary to mention Pope Benedict XV's apostolic letter, which set the principle for missionary at the time and the *Primum Concilium Sinense* as well, “this has always been, and remains, the purpose and aspiration of the Apostolic See, as eloquently expressed in the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* and with the utmost diligence impressed upon the heart” (art.17). In the aftermath of the World War I and the rise of the nation-states, the inculturation emphasized in the pastoral letter was well received and implemented. In his pastoral letter, Pope Benedict XV criticized the practices of some missionaries very harshly:

It would be tragic indeed if any of our missionaries forgot the dignity of their office so completely as to busy themselves with the interests of their terrestrial homeland instead of with those of their homeland in heaven..... We have been deeply saddened by some recent accounts of missionary life, accounts that displayed more zeal for the profit of some particular nation than for the growth of the kingdom of God. This is not the way of the Catholic missionary, not if he is worthy of the name. (19, 20)

A hundred years later, when we look back this sharp accusation against those represent “a faith that is alien to the nation”, we will naturally agree with the proposition that obeying the Pope does not harm patriotism, and that loving the country and the Church is not contradictory.

¹⁵ Archbishop Hon Taifai, “Learning to hear the culture: Insights from Celso Constantini”, unpublished paper for Macau Conference on June 26, 2024.

However, there was a second narrative in the commemoration of *Primum Concilium Sinense*, which characterized this history from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century as the cultural aggression by colonialism and imperialism. The phenomena criticized by Pope Benedict XV regarding some missionaries were presented in the first narrative as issues that the *Primum Concilium Sinense* had to confront; however, in the second narrative, the stance of the *Primum Concilium Sinense* and the problem it aimed to address becomes obscured, with the efforts towards inculturation being overlooked.

Western missionaries came from far away to China and, by habit, intentionally or not, they followed the Western model of church-state relations to compare and measure church-state relations in China, which created a number of problems. Particularly after the Opium War, some missionaries had a strong sense of European cultural superiority and even intended to use the Christian religion to change Chinese society and culture, to which many Chinese inevitably opposed and even hated; at that time, a strong anti-Christian trend and even a social movement formed among many Chinese scholars and ordinary people. An abyss was created between the Church of God and Chinese society, which prevented the further spread of the Gospel of love among the Chinese people.....Due to the subsequent resistance, Shanghai Council had not been able to bring about an immediate and fundamental change, and the Catholic Church in China had still not been able to take off the label of 'foreign religion'.¹⁶

This second mode of narrative, while still the dominant mainstream narrative in China today, seems to many Catholics to be difficult to accept, as it is a denigration of the missionaries and a distortion of facts. Once an old lady Catholic in Shanghai sent me a text saying: Why not talk about the education empire run by the Jesuits in Shanghai, which had so profoundly changed Chinese society and culture, and brought about China's modernization. Indeed, after the Jesuits returned to Shanghai in 1842, in addition to renewal of churches, they paid special attention to cultural missions and established the observatory, museums, library and publishing house in Xujiahui, Shanghai.¹⁷ Many schools were also opened in the parish and in the diocese, including ten that were open to the public and one university under the supervision of the Jesuits. Under the particular political conditions of the time, the missionary efforts of the Cath-

16 Bishop Shen Bin: Rooted in China, to open new horizons for the proclamation of the Gospel, (*Agencia Fides*, May 21, 2024, < http://www.fides.org/en/news/75006-VATICAN_Bishop_Shen_Bin_Rooted_in_China_to_open_new_horizons_for_the_proclamation_of_the_Gospel

17 All of these cultural and scientific research institutions and establishments were founded by the Jesuits in the latter half of the 19th century and had a profound impact on Chinese society. However, in the 1950s, they were all taken over by the government.

olic Church were labeled as cultural aggression, running dog of imperialist to carry out economic exploitation, spiritual oppression, and political control over Chinese believers, which must be “completely and permanently eradicated”¹⁸.

Prof. Gianni Criveller sharply criticized this narrative, calling it historically inaccurate and unduly negative. While acknowledging that some missionaries were driven by nationalistic sentiments, he argued that the majority sought to end French protectorate power over missions and advocate for the Church to forge direct ties with Chinese authorities.¹⁹ They aim was to safeguard the liberties of both missionaries and the faithful. Moreover, Criveller’s extensive research into thousands of missionary letters reveals that many missionaries bought one-way tickets to China, selflessly served the Chinese people as catalysts for social advancement and modernization.²⁰

Cardinal Tagle, in his address, meekly pointed out that the criticism of some missionaries in the *Primum Concilium Sinense* and *Maximum Illud* generated dissatisfaction among certain missionary supporters, who believed it lacked gratitude for their work. He acknowledged the existence of some undesirable phenomena in the mission but emphasized that the sanctity and selfless apostolic work of the most missionaries remained fundamental to evangelization and deserved appreciation.²¹

The second narrative expresses concern about the idea that missionaries sought to “to change Chinese society and culture”. However, scholars have pointed out that cultural change is not necessarily negative. Cultural exchange often occurs through three channels: war, trade and mission, and the corresponding historical activities were carried out by samurai, merchants and mis-

18 See “The decision of the State Council of the Central People’s Government on the policy of dealing with cultural, educational, and charitable institutions and religious groups receiving subsidies from the United States”, this is a document adopted at the 65th meeting of the Central People Government’s Administration Council on December 29, 1950, and published in the People’s Daily on December 30, 1950.

19 Archbishop Hon Taifai presented a slightly different perspective, arguing that this reflects a cognitive difference between the senior and younger missionaries. The senior missionaries, witnessing the corruption of the Chinese government and the arrival of foreign powers in China to help restore social order, believed that they were preventing the Chinese people from greater disasters and were ensuring the possibility and tranquility of missionary work. This view seems to imply even those Missionaries advocating for protectorate were not necessarily nationalists, but rather their experiences in China had led them to this stance. See note 15.

20 Gianni Criveller, “The past must be revisited, but today the problem of the Chinese church is freedom”, AsiaNews, 26 May, 2024, <<https://www.asianews.it/news-en/The-past-must-be-revisited,-but-the-problem-today-for-the-Church-in-China-is-freedom-60800.html>>.

21 “Cardinal Tagle on the new course opened by the Shanghai Conference and the missionary work of the Church today”, Agenzia Fides, May 21, <http://www.fides.org/en/news/75009-VATICAN_Cardinal_Tagle_the_new_beginning_of_the_Council_of_Shanghai_and_the_mission_of_the_Church_today>.

sionaries.²² Since the cultural exchange in the first two is a by-product, and only the religion itself reaches the heart of cultural communication, therefore, the missionary activity promotes cultural dissemination more than the other two. Some scholars further pointed out that Western missionaries have made outstanding contributions to the cultural exchanges between China and the West, and to the introduction of Western intellectual achievements and educational systems to China, and played major role to China's modernization.²³

In some areas, the cultural transmission spearheaded by missionaries was critical to the development of Chinese society. In recent decades, the scholars in Shanghai have referred to the Jesuits' efforts in Xujiahui as the "Base of Western learning", recognizing the Jesuits' role in disseminating Western science and education, which became a defining feature of the city's identity. Given to the Catholic foundation of Shanghai and the support of the French government, which held the protectorate power in China, the Jesuits developed this vast epicenter of Western learning in the area near the French Concession. From the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, during this critical century, these institutions promoted modern academia and new ideas, which played a key role in China's modernization. Moreover, they did not merely spread "Western learning", but integrated and blended it with traditional Chinese scholarship, resulting in a new form of knowledge that evolved into "Shanghai School" Culture. As a result, these scholars preferred to adopt a paradigm of cultural dialogue and exchange instead of the colonial-cultural aggression paradigm. Precisely because of this shift in narrative and paradigm over the past decade, the remnants of Catholic Churches have been valued, explored and protected.²⁴ Regrettably, while the academic community is striving to secure space for religion, the religious leaders not only remain inactive but also timidly concede this space, bringing shame to the faithful.

The significance of the *Primum Concilium Sinense* and its document has long been underestimated, Prof. Leopold Leeb once commented.²⁵ There are many reasons for this. First of all, the Catholic population was only at 2.21

22 See Chen Cunfu, "Religious Communication and Cultural Exchange", *World Religions Studies*, 2002(1), 11-16.

23 See Li Tiangang, *The Chinese Rite Controversy: History, Documentation and Significance* (Beijing: Chinese People University Press, 2019), and many others' works.

24 More and more urban development and popular cultural projects are associating themselves with this chapter of history in positive way, such as in this recent series report titled 'Becoming China: Shanghai Xujiahui', "Opening Eyes to the World, 'East Meets West' from History to the Future," *The Paper*, 2024-10-4, <<https://new.qq.com/rain/a/20241004A02FRZ00>>

25 Leopold Leeb, "The Historical Background of the Shanghai Bishops' Conference". in his unpublished translation of *Acta et Decreta, I Concilii Plenarii Sinensis*.

million,²⁶ which had small social impact among the “400 hundred million” compatriots. In addition, the majority of the Catholic population was in the rural areas, and the Church, just beginning to establish roots in society through charity, education and healthcare services, faced renewed opposition from the Anti-Christian Movement (1922-1927). The historical era of the *Primum Concilium Sinense* took place in the midst of this movement when many nationalists sought to incite hostility towards religions, particularly Protestantism and Catholicism, in order to limit the Christian influence, especially on the younger generation. During the Chaos of Warlord Era(1916-1926) and the subsequent Northern Expedition(1926-1928), missionaries’ safety could hardly be assured.²⁷ It is not surprising that a review of Shun-pao(申报), China’s largest-circulating newspaper based in Shanghai at the time, reveals no coverage of the *Primum Concilium Sinense*.

Despite these challenging circumstances, the *Primum Concilium Sinense* conveyed the *sensus fidei* clearly: opposition to the foreign protectorate, support for the anti-colonialism movement, strengthening the native clergy formation, expressions of care for the Chinese people, respect for Chinese culture and admiration for traditional Chinese virtues. These positions reflected the Church’s mission to evangelize rather than to reach a political compromise. The council documents stipulated that foreign missionaries must refrain from participating in political and commercial activities, joining political associations unless obtain a special dispensation of one’s own superior, or engaging in anything that might cause others perceive that evangelization served a foreign country’s interests. The decree ensured that the Church and missionaries were not misunderstood and could witness to the pure Gospel message across different nation. “Those who have followed the events of the Church in China and its past history know what this means.”²⁸ At the council a hundred years ago, the Holy Spirit gave the Church leaders courage, enabling them to relinquish the

26 Cf. Joseph Metzler, *Die Synoden in China, Japan und Korea, 1570-1931*, Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag, 1980), 181-222, in Leopold Leeb, “The Historical Background of the Shanghai Bishops’ Conference”, 6.

27 For example, around the time of 1925, movements advocating for “Reclamation of Educational Rights” and “The Prohibition of Foreign Missionaries in China” gained momentum, with the Church and church-run schools being directly affected. The March 24, 1927, Nanjing Incident saw soldiers looted foreigners in Nanjing city and Xiaguan, and among the dead were missionaries. However, this event marked the transition from the peak to the decline of the anti-Christian movement. For further reference, Celso Constantini, “Celso Constantini’s Memoirs,” Chapter 2, “Cultivating in China: The Anti-Religious Movement of 1926,” available at: <<https://ccreadbible.info/costantini-ch2/costantini-ch2-1926.html>>.

28 Cardinal Tagle, “the ‘new beginning’ of the Council of Shanghai and the mission of the Church today”, Fides News Agency, May 21, available at: <https://www.fides.org/en/news/75009-VATICAN_Cardinal_Tagle_the_new_beginning_of_the_Council_of_Shanghai_and_the_mission_of_the_Church_today>.

protectorate and the security offered by alliances with certain political powers. Today, how many Church leaders in China can resist the allure of the political entanglement? How Many can withstand the pressure of political isolation?

III. The *Sensus Fidelium* of Shanghai's Catholics:

Bishop Zhu and “Revitalizing the Nation through Faith”

The Church's life has always shown a certain diversity, complexity, and ambiguity in different times and contexts. However, the *sensus fidelium*—formed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and embodied in the faithful's consensus on matters of faith and morality—demonstrates a relative stability in faith, akin to the pulse of faith, fueling the Church's renewal. In Shanghai, several prominent Catholic families, such as the Xu(徐), Zhu(朱), Shen(沈), Lu(陆), Ai(艾), He(何), and Zhang(张) families, stood out. These families made significant contributions to the local Church, had numerous religious vocations, or held prominent positions in the government or business sectors.

When Jesuits returned to Shanghai in the 19th century, missionaries systematically cultivated the *Sensus fidelium* of believers, establishing clear norms for participating in liturgies, the faith formation within families, and marital choices, among other aspects. The children of these families received rigorous religious education from a young age and attended Church schools that provided modern education, thus preparing them to navigate China's transition from tradition to modernity²⁹. Many Catholic families amassed significant wealth, established businesses, invested in the community, and saw their descendants thrive across various fields. At that time, Catholic youth often married within the faith, and strong familial alliances contributed to even greater family prosperity. With rich faith traditions, these families actively promoted the Church's mission and supported its charitable endeavors, frequently producing members who joined religious order or received holy orders. The Zhu family is particularly noteworthy. Bishop Zhu Kaimin (朱开敏, 1868–1960), who was among the six bishops ordained as a direct outcome of the *Primum Concilium Sinense*, was a member of this family.³⁰

29 The boys of the Zhu family typically attended St. Ignatius College at Zikawei or St. Francis Xavier High School, followed by higher education at Aurora University, and then pursued further studies in France and the United States. The girls mostly attended Xuhui Girls' School, which also was known as Tsung Te Girl's School or Le Pensionnat de Zikawei. See: Xu Hongxin, “The Zhu Family of Dongjiadu: Studies and Social Service,” *Memories and Archives*<档案春秋>, 3(2018): 60–64, 63.

30 Originally, this article for Macau Conference primarily focused on the Zhu family, but due to various unresolved issues, the perspective had to be adjusted. The other five bishops are Joseph Hu Ruoshan

Bishop Zhu Kaimin, also known by his baptismal name Simon, entered the Jesuit order at the age 20 in 1888, was ordained in 1898, and took his final vows five years later in 1903. He served in places like Changshu, Jiangsu (江苏常熟), establishing educational initiatives. In early 1924, he was appointed Dean of Nantong (南通) and acting Dean of Haimen (海门). Archbishop Costantini, Apostolic Delegate to China, visited Haimen in May 1925 and praised Zhu Kaimin's work. With Costantini's recommendation, in August 1926, the Holy See appointed Zhu as titular bishop of Lesvi, an ancient Roman city from the Diocletian era, located in what is now Mauritania, and the first bishop of the newly established Vicariate of Haimen. On April 11, 1946, Pope Pius XII issued a decree to establish the ecclesiastical hierarchy in China, and filled with joy, Bishop Zhu took office at Jesus Sacred Heart Church Chongming, also known as Dadongsuo (大公所), envisioning further growth for the Church.³¹ However, his advanced age limited his capacity amidst the changing political landscape.³²

Bishop Zhu's ordination was a moment of great celebration for the Shanghai Diocese, as evidenced by the various celebrations organized by the local Church community. Despite the turbulent period in 1927, which saw Shanghai experiencing similar upheaval as the rest of the country, the enthusiasm of local faithful remained strong. The joy and gratitude over the Vatican's appointment of the first native bishop to the Shanghai Diocese shone through these grand celebrations.³³

(胡若山) for the vicariate apostolic of Taizhou Diocese 台州, 1881-1962), Aloysius Chen Guotdi (陈国砥 for the vicariate apostolic of Fenyang 汾阳, 1875-1930), Odoric Cheng Hede (成和德 for the prefecture apostolic of Puqi 蒲圻, 1873-1928), Melchior Sun Dezheng (孙德桢 for the prefecture apostolic of Lixian/Angu 蠡县/安国, 1869-1951), and Philip Zhao Huaiyi (赵怀义 for the vicariate apostolic of Xuanhua 宣化, 1880-1927). This marked the first ordination of native bishops since Gregory Lopez (罗文藻, 1617-1691) in 1685, over 240 years earlier, further advancing the inculturation process of in China.

31 Newsletter, *Sacred Heart Bulletin*, 1947, No. 6, vol. 9, 197.

32 After 1949, he had to reside in Shanghai, possibly living in the Taishan Apartments on Huaihai Road and an apartment on Jinling Road. In 1951, he briefly returned to Haimen for his priesthood silver jubilee. After the September 8th Event, which was a crackdown on the Catholic Church in Shanghai, he returned to Haimen in 1955, moved to Nanjing in the summer of 1956, where he received "warm hospitality from high rank officials". According to family elders and related documents, Bishop Zhu was completely relieved of his duties on April 20, 1958, labeled a rightist in 1959, and lost his sight that same year. He passed away in isolation from his family on March 12, 1960, at the age of 92. The now-destitute Zhu family, with the help of overseas remittances, purchased a nanmu coffin and bury him in the priests' cemetery at Yuan Gong Temple in Haimen. His remains were exhumed and burned by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, and his Nanmu coffin was taken over by someone in power. His rightist label was rescinded in 1984.

33 On March 3, 1927, Bishop Zhu returned to Shanghai from Europe, and subsequently, the Shanghai Catholic community and Church organized 13 celebrations in his honor over the next two weeks. See: *Journal of the Catholic Magazine* (圣教杂志), 4(1927): 181.

Among the six newly ordained bishops, the Haimen Diocese experienced the most substantial growth. Located north of the Yangtze River, this diocese included Nantong, one of China's earliest modern cities, developed by entrepreneur Zhang Jian.³⁴ Bishop Zhu significantly contributed to areas south of Tongzhou, such as Haimen, Qidong, and Chongming. He leveraged his family's resources and social status to raise funds, establish schools, and open hospitals and philanthropic institutions in the region, earning him the title "The Bishop who Revitalized the Nation through Faith."³⁵

As Costantini stated that "the potted plants in the church garden" had ultimately been officially transplanted onto Chinese soil, where they would naturally take root, flourish and multiply,³⁶ the *Catholic Magazine* hailed this development, writing, "...Local clergy are to govern the local faithful. Successive popes have adhered to this principle, prioritizing missionary efforts and focusing on the formation of native clergy. Deeply understanding that the Church should be rooted in the native soil, this enables the tree to develop firm roots and flourish."³⁷

The ordination of Chinese bishops was indeed a symbolic event of great significance in the Church's mission. Joseph Ma Xiangbo (1840-1939), Bishop Zhu's uncle, articulated the importance of this event during the celebration at St. Ignatius College, "Previously, people labeled Catholicism as a foreign religion, but now that we have our own bishop, it should be called the 'Chinese Church,' as the head of the Church here is a Chinese. Accusations of being

34 Zhangjian(张謇1853-1926), see Zhang Xinke and Qin Zhulin, *One Man and One City: Zhang Jian and Nantong* (Nanjing University, 2023). The Haimen Diocese, originally established as an Apostolic Vicariate in 1926 and later promoted to a Diocese in 1946, is located north of the Yangtze River. It included northern areas such as Rudong, Rugao, and Hai'an which are currently under the Nanjing Diocese; the central Tongzhou Nantong, where Zhang Jian promoted the development of Nantong City; the southeastern Haimen and Qidong, which are currently under the Haimen Diocese; and Chongming Island, later incorporated into the Shanghai Diocese.

35 His remarkable achievements in Church development included the establishment of 156 churches in the Haimen Diocese by 1949, with 56 in the Chongming Deanery, 26 in the Haimen Deanery, 33 in the Qidong Deanery, and 25 in the Nantong Deanery. There were 45 native priests, 32 seminarians, and 57 Sisters of the Infant Jesus, of which 37 had taken perpetual vows. He built the bishop's office and the Sacred Heart Seminary in Haimen and also founded the Sisters of the Infant Jesus. In social services, he established primary schools in various parishes, a high school with agricultural training, and Catholic middle schools at two towns. His charitable works included founding a home for the aged, a hospital, an orphanage, and a foundling home. See: Huang Qiyang etc., "A Brief Biography of Zhu Kaimin," in Zhang Xingling (ed.), *Religious History Anthology (Jiangsu Historical and Cultural Records)*, No. 91, & *Nantong Historical and Cultural Records*, No.16 (Jiangsu Historical and Cultural Records Editorial Department, 1997), 201–204. Also see *Jianghai Chunqiu: Selected Nantong Historical and Cultural Records*(II), ie. *Jiangsu Historical and Cultural Records*(No.106) & *Nantong Historical and Cultural Records*, No.17 (Jiangsu Historical and Cultural Records Editorial Department, 1998), 178–181.

36 See, *Cardinal Costantini, Memoirs of Cardinal Costantini*(Part Two)(Liu Jiaxiang ed., Taipei CDD, 1921). see: <<https://ccreadbible.info/costantini-ch2/costantini-ch2-1926.html#costantini-1926-9>>

37 Editor's Comment, *Journal of the Catholic Magazine*, 1926(9), 352-3.

foreign collaborators, along with the gruesome acts of carving out organs or gouging out eyeballs from corpses, should no longer be uttered by anyone!”³⁸

Bishop Simon Zhu himself also actively demonstrate the significance of native bishops. In managing Church-state relations, he firmly defended the Church's interests and the *sensus fidelium*, such as when the acquisition of a land in Nantong for the cathedral in 1931 was obstructed by the Provincial Land Bureau. Bishop Zhu argued, “The clergy, faithful, administrators, and those who fund Church property purchases are all Chinese.”³⁹ Consequently, he contended that Church property should not be subject to foreign ownership regulations. After negotiations, the property registration was successfully resolved. Similar issues have recurred in recent times in Catholic Haimen Diocese, though handled differently.⁴⁰ During the Sino-Japanese War, Bishop Zhu upheld a patriotic stance, refusing to collaborate with the Japanese puppet government. He fostered self-reliance within the Church by establishing factories that manufactured textiles, gloves, bedding, and towels, thereby helping the Church to survive the crisis. In the 1950s, amidst “the Offering Churches and Temples” movement⁴¹, Bishop Zhu, limited in his ability to fully exercise his ministry fully, bluntly inquired of the officials, “When will you return our church?”⁴² For him, evangelization was a life-defining mission, and defending the Church's interests was a sacred duty.

38 Latest News, Welcome home Bishop Zhu, *Journal of the Catholic Magazine*, 4(1926):181.

39 This incident occurred in 1931, and the official letter can be found in “Official Documents for the Dispute over Church Property Rights in Nantong Catholic Church, Jiangsu,” *Journal of the Catholic Magazine*, 1935(7). Later, when the Land Bureau issued another directive, it acknowledged that the church could apply for property ownership registration.

40 During the author's 2016 visit to the Haimen Diocese, it was learned that the Cathedral and the diocesan curia in downtown Nantong had encountered property registration issues that mirrored similar challenges, which were eventually resolved with special handling due to the attention paid by a high level official and the priority given by the local government.

41 In the early years following the founding of the People's Republic of China, the state took over public service facilities such as schools and hospitals established by churches. In the late 1950s, particularly during “the Great Leap Forward”, the state encouraged the donation of churches by Christian communities, and similarly, temples or mosques were donated by other religious groups, marking the beginning of a large-scale movement known as the “Offering of Churches and Temples”(献堂献庙) movement.

42 “Faith as Family Heritage”, *Black Wall, White Wall and Meijiang Alley*, compiled by Zhu family descendants, Family Internal Publication, 120.

IV. The *Sensus Fidelium* of Shanghai's Catholics:

faith as the foundation of Zhu family legacy

Bishop Simon Zhu's success in evangelization was closely tied to the support of his family—the Zhu family of Dongjiadu(董家渡)—and the robust *sensus fidelium* among Shanghai Catholics. Originated from Qingpu, Jiangsu, the Zhu Family of Dongjiadu primarily engaged in sandboat transportation. They converted to Catholicism in the mid-17th century.⁴³ By the late 18th century, some family members had moved to Jinjiazhuang, on the northern bank of Dianshan Lake, then further to Zhuxiang(诸巷), now Shangtang Town(商榻镇), during the Daoguang era in the 19th century. The Zhu family, devout members of their parish, had not only a church in their hometown but also a chapel at a sandboat dock in Yingkou(营口), northeastern China.⁴⁴ In 1860, due to the Taiping Rebellion, the Zhu family sought refuge in Dongjiadu, Shanghai, where they continued their religious devotion.⁴⁵ Following their relocation from the Zhuxiang to Shanghai, numerous religious vocations emerged from their descendants, with the Shen family being the most prominent and the Zhu family a close second.⁴⁶ Originating from the devout Zhuxiang congregation, the Zhu family has always considered their faith an integral part of their life.

43 The Zhu family ancestor, known as the Widow Zhu, Lady Shen, likely lived around the late Shunzhi or early Kangxi period. According to records, she was a widow with two sons and a daughter, Dabao, who fell ill during her teenage years. Various attempts at healing, including divination, incense offerings, and prayers at the Yuewang Temple, proved futile. Finally, she studied Catholic teachings for 40 days in a Church at Songjiang, after which her daughter recovered, leading all four family members to be baptized. See Shen Zaixi, *The Records of the Zhuxiang Parish*, (Family internal publication, Taipei 98 Publishing House, 2014 Reprint), pp. 3–4. Another account dates this to the late Kangxi period, around 1720. See: Nie Haochun, “Young Zhu Zhiyao,” *Journal of Xinxiang Normal University* (9)1995, 25–30(25).

The Shen and Zhu families were the largest clans in Jinjiazhuang, and intermarriages between the two were common. For instance, in the Zhu genealogy, the first-generation member Wenxiang married a woman from the Shen family. Both of Bishop Zhu's father's first two wives were Shen women.

44 The altar, kneelers, and various furnishings within the chapel were all procured from Shanghai and transported by sandboats to Yingkou. The priest who once served at the Church in Yingkou was likely Father Marie Felix Choulet (MEP, 1854–1923). After being ordained in 1880, he served as a missionary in China and became a bishop from 1901 to 1920. see Shen Zaixi, *The Records of the Zhuxiang Parish*, 35.

45 According to *The Zhuxiang Parish*, the Zhu family fled Zhuxiang during the Taiping Rebellion in the 10th year of Xianfeng. Another account suggests this occurred in the 11th year of Xianfeng, just days after Easter in 1861. In *Histoire de la mission du Kiang-nan*, it is documented that by the end of 1860, the Catholic community in Zhuxiang had begun docking sandboats along the Huangpu River. (See, Joseph de La Serviere, *Histoire de la mission du Kiang-nan*, Shanghai Yiwun Publishing House, 1983, pp. 104–105. Most of refugees relocated to Dongjiadu (by the early 20th century, over 2,000 Catholics in Dongjiadu were from Zhuxiang), with smaller groups moving to Xujiahui (61 households, about 302 people), Hongkou and Lujiazui (a total of 404 people), Sheshan Zhangpuqiao (12 households, 90 people), and other areas. see: Shen Zaixi, *The Records of the Zhuxiang Parish*, 9.

46 Shen Jinbiao (ed.), *List of Religious from the Zhuxiang Parish* (Family Publication) (Taipei: 98 Publishing House, 2014 Reprint).

The Zhu family of Dongjiadu had three main branches, each distinguished by the colors of their old residences and neighborhoods: “Black Wallhead,” “White Wallhead” and “Meijia Alley”.⁴⁷ The “Black Wallhead” branch was led by Zhu Puzhai (1828–1890), father to Zhu Zhiyao (1863–1955) and Bishop Simon Zhu Kaimin. The “White Wallhead” branch was led by his cousin Zhu Houzhai, while the “Meijia Alley” branch was headed by distant relatives Zhu Wanmao, whose descendants include four Jesuits, whom we will mention later, and Zhu Wanshun. Collectively, they were known as the “Dongjiadu sandboat Zhu family”. War and urban development in the last century erased the architectural traces of black wallhead, white wallhead, and the alley. However, the descendants of Black Wallhead and Meijia Alley whom I encountered still carried the family’s enduring faith legacy.

The Black Wallhead branch of the Zhu family was notably devout. Bishop Zhu Kaimin’s mother, Marta Ma, hailed from Danyang, Jiangsu. Marta married Zhu Puzhai after his first wife passed away, and bore him six children,⁴⁸ including national entrepreneur Mr. Zhu Zhiyao and bishop Simon Zhu. Marta’s three brothers were prominent figures in Chinese history.⁴⁹ The Ma brothers, especially Ma Xiangbo and Ma Jianzhong, mentored their nephews, Bishop Simon Zhu and his siblings, offering them international exposure and helping them establish businesses. This support enabled the Zhu family not only to contribute significantly to both Church and society, but also provided the financial means for Bishop Simon Zhu’s work in Haimen Diocese. For instance, when the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out, Bishop Zhu received substantial support from his brothers, who liquidated family assets, including 300 acres of land in Pudong. From the resulting funds, 500,000 yuan were donated to build a hospital in Haimen, and the remainder supported the Church in Shanghai, as well as in other dioceses, and aided the poor. Mr. Zhu Zhiyao’s guiding

47 See Xu Hongxin, “The Story of the Zhu Family at Dongjiadu Black Wallhead: A Century Chronicle of the Zhu Brothers”, available at < <https://www.doc88.com/p-7418810941620.html?s=rel&id=1>] (<https://www.doc88.com/p-7418810941620.html?s=rel&id=1>).

48 Among the six children: Sister Zhu Aizhen, also known as Sister Agnes, was a member of the Society Helper of the Holy Souls and once served as the principal of the school affiliated to the Church of Sacred Family in Hongkou. Zhu Zhiyao was a prominent national entrepreneur; Zhu Yunzuo, who studied in France, worked as a comprador but tragically passed away at the age of 35. Zhu Kaimin became Bishop; Zhu Jilin was also a renowned industrialist, and his wife, Song Yu, was the daughter of Song Shusun, a Shanghai comprador known as “Half the city owner”. The family was so rich that her dowry procession was so grand that it filled “rue du Consulat”, located in East French Concession of Shanghai. Lady Song was a devout Catholic.

49 The three Ma brothers—Ma Jianxun (1833–1901), Ma Xiangbo (1840–1939), and Ma Jianzhong (1845–1900)—were all involved in the Self-Strengthening Movement during the late Qing Dynasty. Ma Jianxun served in the Huai Army’s grain department, Ma Xiangbo was a prominent educator and political activist, and Ma Jianzhong authored *Wen Tong*, the first systematic Chinese grammar book written by a Chinese author.

words to his descendants were, “I’ve stored our family wealth in heaven”.⁵⁰

Reviewing the industrial legacy of the Black Wallhead branch of the Zhu Family, it is evident that the businesses or ventures in which this family was involved in and helped establish, such as the Societe Franco-Chinoise de Constructions Metalliques et Mecaniques, the Iron Mining Company, and the Tatung Shipping Company, were severely affected by the tumultuous period. This often resulted in the family grappling financial challenges, frequently unable to balance their income with their expenditures. Despite the hardships and financial setbacks due to the war, this Zhu family was recognized for their philanthropic endeavors. Marta Ma managed the household with frugality and maintained the family’s tradition of generosity. After her death, her daughter-in-law, Lady Song took up this mantle. Mr. Zhu Zhiyao served as Vice President of the Shanghai Catholic Action, an organization that funded schools and hospitals, regularly visited prisons, and was actively engaged in charitable works. The family’s devotion also nurtured religious vocations, with more than 11 prominent clergy and religious sisters emerging from this Black Wallhead branch of the Zhu Family.⁵¹

The Meijia Alley was home to yet another branch of the Zhu Family from Zhuxiang, and this family also was filled with prominent figures in witnesses of faith, including a family of four Jesuit priests: Zhu Shude (Francis-Xavier, 1913-1983), Zhu Lide (Michele, 1917-1997), Zhu Yude (Joseph, 1928-), and Zhu Lide (Matthew, 1933-2024). The father of this family, Mr. Zhu Zuoting, a comprador, co-founded the Tatung Shipping Company alongside Mr. Zhu Zhiyao and the Lu family. In 1933, Zhu Zuoting joined a Chinese pilgrimage to Rome for the jubilee celebration, participating in the Eucharistic procession presided over by Pope Pius XI as an acolyte, holding the white canopy.⁵² His two young-

50 “Faith as Family Heritage”, *Black Wallhead, White Wallhead & Meijia Alley* (The Zhu Family Descendants’ Collection), 119. Also see Xu Hongxin, “The Story of the Zhu Family at Dongjiadu Black Wallhead: A Century Chronicle of the Zhu Brothers”.

51 Including Bishop Simon Zhu, Jesuit, his two sisters Sr. Aigu, nun of Society of Helpers for the Holy Souls, and Sr. Xingbao, the nun of Congregation of Presentation of Mary; Fr. Zhu Ansheng (?-1954), diocese priest, and his sister Sr. Agatha Zhu Yuebao (1892-1983), nun of Society of the Helpers for the Holy Souls; Fr. Vincent Zhu Hongsheng (1916-1993), Jesuit and his three sisters Sr. Zhu Mingzhang, nun of Order of Carmelites; Sr. Zhu Lizhang (1909-1931), the nun of Society of the Helpers for the Holy Souls, and Sr. Zhu Hongzhang; Sr. Marie Agatha Zhu Zhaojuan (1918-2012), nun of Society of Helpers for the Holy Souls, and her cousin Fr. Simon Zhu Enrong (1932-2022), Jesuit, etc. From this branch, there were at least 11 religious in three generations.

52 The pilgrimage group consisted of 36 members, including 9 bishops and 8 priests, led by Shanghai industrialist Mr. Lu Bohong, who served as the head of this group, with Deng Weiping from Beijing serving as deputy head and Lu Bohong’s son, Lu Yingeng, as executive coordinator. The group departed from Shanghai on May 12, 1933, passing through Macau, Singapore, Colombo, and Mumbai, arriving in Rome on June 5, 1933. After spending two weeks in Italy, they visited France, Belgium, and Switzerland, returning to Shanghai on August 8, 1933. This pilgrimage was particularly special as three Chinese bishops were ordained in Rome, coinciding with the 300th anniversary of Xu Guangqi’s death and the

er brothers were also Jesuit priests. His wife and cousin from the same lineage, Zhu Libao, had two priest brothers who were diocesan priests and an aunt who was a religious sister. Under such a deep family religious commitment, six out of eight sons felt a religious calling to become priests, and eventually, of which four were persevered. However, on September 8, 1955, the situation took a drastic turn for the worse; the mother lost all her sons overnight as they were imprisoned. Later, six of the eight sons received labor sentences totaling 162 years, with the oldest, Francis-Xavier, passing away in prison in 1983 after being re-incarcerated in 1981. This mother, lauded as both a mother of suffering and a mother of vocations, encouraged her two sons, who were imprisoned during priestly formation to persevere, and they eventually become Jesuits in their later years. Fr. Joseph, now 96-year-old, is retired and living in Shanghai, and Fr. Matthew, now 91-year-old, currently in Taipei, is still serving in the parish.⁵³

I had the honor of witnessing Fr. Joseph's pastoral work in his final years. On March 22, 2014, at Minhang Yishan Funeral Home, he presided over the memorial Mass for Bishop Joseph Fan Zhongliang (1918-2014), a rare public service for him as a leader in the underground Church within the complex political and religious context. Typically, Father Zhu celebrated Mass in what was once his family's residence, with Sunday Mass attendance being so large that sometimes overflowed into neighboring home. In his final public Mass in July 2019, Fr. Joseph Zhu reaffirmed his obedience to the Holy See, despite having reservations about certain pastoral guidance.⁵⁴ Remaining steadfast in the faith that sustained him during his 32 years of imprisonment, Father Joseph chose seclusion to avoid misunderstandings regarding his stance, recognizing that

20th century commemoration of Jesus' Passion. See *Chinese Catholic Pilgrims' Jubilee of Redemption Commemorative Book* (ed. by Tianjin Social Welfare News, September 1935).

53 Father Matthew Zhu passed away on December 9, 2024. His body was donated to the School of Medicine at Fu Jen Catholic University for anatomical instruction. This note was added by the author during the final proofreading of the manuscript.

54 On June 28, 2019, the Vatican issued "*Orientations for the Chinese Clergy, Respecting their Freedom of Conscience*", see VaticanNews:< <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2019-06/china-catholic-clergy-state-register-respect-conscience.html>>, This document prompted Fr. Joseph Zhu to decide not to publicly celebrate sacraments anymore, with aging being not the primary reason. Since Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 letter to Chinese Catholics, underground Church priests have felt pressured by the Chinese government to "emerge from the clandestine Church" into the open Church, indicating acceptance of the Patriotic Association's governance and principles of independence. However, they were unwilling to register, unable to accept the conditions related to the Patriotic Association's governance. Despite existing regulations requiring underground clergy and religious sites to register with government departments, the pressure on underground clergy increased as the Chinese government strengthened its legal framework for religious policies, especially with the *Regulations on Religious Affairs* implemented on February 1, 2018. They increasingly felt the risk of being deemed illegal and facing potential suppression. It was only after the issuance of this *Orientations* that underground clergy in Shanghai recognized the high risks involved and the difficulty of maintaining their clandestine status. The clergy felt that the Vatican was less supportive of their efforts to uphold doctrinal integrity. Many expressed to the author that they would, at most, cease to provide sacraments to faithful as priests when the time comes.

those unacceptable principles of the Patriotic Association had not changed.⁵⁵

Among the Zhu family of the Meijiang Alley and the Black Wallhead branches mentioned in this article, the descendants of Paul Xu Guangqi, other urban Catholics, and the fishing Catholic communities,⁵⁶ a common faith heritage is evident: a profound love for God, deep reverence for the Virgin Mary, and unwavering obedience to the Pope. The descendants of Mr. Zhu Zhiyao, who encapsulate their family history with his motto: “My God and my all”, believe that the faith, hope, and charity of their forebears, solidified as a strong devotion to God, rather than material wealth, were bequeathed to them as a spiritual legacy. This legacy has allowed subsequent generations to “perceive God’s presence among us” even in the face of the hardships and political upheavals, granting them the courage to live with integrity, undeterred by oppression or temptation.⁵⁷

In December 2021, Fr. Joseph Zhu wrote a testimony of his faith, expressing his profound gratitude for the Virgin Mary’s guidance: “My vocation and my priestly life are thanks to the Virgin Mary’s guidance and grace. To repay her great kindness, I wish to love her son Jesus as she did.”⁵⁸ He shared that while Our Lady of Sheshan holds a special place for the Shanghai Church and himself, Our Lady of Guadalupe offered him a unique vision: the hope that one day, the door to freedom of faith in China would open for Jesus Christ. To honor this vision, he converted his home, a 20-square-meter room into the “Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel”. When he went on a pilgrimage to Mexico in May 2019,⁵⁹ after praying at the site of the Virgin’s apparition to Juan Diego, Fr. Joseph unexpectedly rose from his wheelchair and completed the pilgrimage

55 As for the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, different people have different attitudes, thus the church was divided. See Rachel Zhu Xiaohong, “Bishop Jin Luxian and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association of Shanghai,” in *People, Communities, and the Catholic Church in China*, Edited by Yik-Yi Chu and Paul P. Marini (New York:Palgrave Macmillan ,2020), 45-60.

56 Although Catholic fishermen may not have had the same level of education, social status, or public engagement as prominent Catholic families in Shanghai, they shared a deep piety devotion to the Virgin Mary. They also held a strong tradition of ancestor veneration. See Rachel Zhu Xiaohong, “Catholic Fishermen in the Qingpu District of Shanghai,” in *The Catholic Church, The Bible, and Evangelization in China (Christianity in Modern China Series)* (New York:Palgrave Macmillan,2021) Ch.5, 89-107.

57 “Faith as Family Heritage”, *Black Wallhead, White Wallhead & Meijia Alley*(The Zhu Family Descendants’ Collection), 121.

58 At this time, he had suffered two strokes, and was diagnosed with cancer. Fr. Joseph Zhu Yude, “Our Lady of Guadalupe’s Special Grace to Father Zhu Yude” ed. by Sep.8th Editorial Committee, Internal Publication, December 8, 2022.

59 On Our Lady of Guadalupe’s Day (December 9) in 2018, he received his passport and travel permit to Hong Kong & Macau, which had been withheld for 15 years. Subsequently, on New Year’s Day 2019, he obtained a travel permit to Taiwan, enabling him to attend his brother Father Matthew Zhu’s silver jubilee of ordination on January 9. Later that year, in May, his niece Teresa arranged for him a carefully planned pilgrimage to Rome, followed by an impromptu visit to Mexico to venerate Our Lady of Guadalupe. Reflecting now, these pilgrimages seem to have become gifts marking his retirement.

on foot, an event he considered a “minor miracle” and attributed to the Virgin Mary’s intercession. The love for Mary and the desire to follow her “fiat” with “a double spirit” of obedience to God’s will are central aspects of Father Joseph’s spirituality and that of the broader Shanghai Catholic community.

In November 2015, a hotel in Hongkou, Shanghai, a very well attended memorial Mass was offered for Ms. Zhu Libao, marking the 20th anniversary of her passing. The service concluded with the hymn “Great Pope”: “Great Pope, we support you; dear Pope, we love you. You are Christ’s representative, the sun of truth, educating all people, guiding us to heaven.”⁶⁰ The voices of elderly attendees were as robust as those of the youth, showing the enduring passion of these older Catholic faithful who had spent their prime years in labor camps due to their refusal to support the Three Self Patriotic Movement and their fidelity to papal authority. The Zhu family’s treasured photos with the Pope, displayed among friends and family, symbolize their unwavering faith. In the postmodern era, which often questions traditional authority, the adherence to the Pope remains a cornerstone of the faith for Shanghai Catholics, a testament to the enduring influence of their forebears’ legacy.

V. Conclusion

As discussed, the Church’s *seusus fidei* arises from active participation in Church life and adherence to the Magisterium, forming a consensus in faith and morals under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This consciousness was as relevant in the *Primum Concilium Sinense* a century ago as it is in the recently-concluded 16th Synod of Bishops. Church teachings from Magisterium, through the councils, shape this *seusus fidelium*, with the dynamic and outcomes of the councils further deepening this consciousness. This paper’s exploration of the *Primum Concilium Sinense* and the Zhu family’s faith legacy illustrates the mutually reinforcing relationship between the two.

With the transformation of Chinese society, a church led by native clergy, as envisioned by the *Primum Concilium Sinense*, is now a reality. The presence of foreign missionaries has significantly decreased, and foreign influences have been largely curtailed. Yet, the space for evangelization has evolved, and the approach to proclaiming the Gospel has also been profoundly affected. The government’s policy of “countering infiltration” has become the primary prin-

⁶⁰ It is said that the melody of this hymn had been adopted from a march, and lyrics were composed by the domestic writer. Hope to receive corrections from experts.

ciple in religious affairs management,⁶¹ often perceiving the Holy See and the universal Church as external “infiltration” forces. Given the close association between episcopal appointments and “sovereignty”, bishop selection remains a critical control point.⁶² While all officially recognized bishops in China are now in communion with the universal Church following a provisional agreement between the Vatican and China since 2018, the Church’s leadership still exhibits local characteristics: some preachers incorporate political themes into their sermons from the pulpit, websites of the Patriotic Association and dioceses feature reports on secular events,⁶³ and forums on “Sinicization” are prevalent. The Synod on Synodality, from its preparation, diocesan phase, continental phase, to this year’s second ordinary session, has been a grand process that has spanned nearly four years. However, domestic church media have only provided fragmented reports and introductions on ‘Synodality’.

The proceedings of the *Primum Concilium Sinense* a century ago urged missionaries to “abstain from inappropriate secular concerns and all political affairs” and to obey the civil authorities “if these laws do not contravene justice and religious beliefs”(21-22). The apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* further cautioned missionaries to focus on the homeland in heaven instead of the terrestrial homeland, to do otherwise would be tragic (19). Though intended for missionaries at that time, these principles offer valuable guidance for today’s local clergy. However, all bishops and parish heads in China are members of various levels of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, benefiting from social and political privileges, thus justifying their positions.⁶⁴ Un-

61 “The Notice on Several Issues in Improving the Work related to Religion “ (February 1991) issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council was the first to propose managing religious affairs in accordance with the law. Its purpose was to protect the legitimate rights of religious activities and groups, prevent illegal activities, and resist foreign influence. This evolved into the 16-character guideline for management of religious work, “protect the lawful, stop the unlawful, resist infiltration, combat crime”. In May 2014, Xi Jinping elevated these principles to the basic approach in addressing religious issues at the Xinjiang Religion Conference.

62 See He Husheng and Wang Wenhui, “Four Dimensions for Profoundly Understanding General Secretary Xi Jinping’s Important Remarks on Religious Affairs”, *Studies on Marxist Theory*, 12(2022), 93–101, 96.

63 See Liu Mengyao, “China: for the communist government the fourth commandment means “honoring the Communist Party”, Zenit, Oct.15, 2024, <<https://zenit.org/2024/10/15/china-for-the-communist-government-the-fourth-commandment-means-honoring-the-communist-party/>>.

64 Within the context of the United Front in China, bishops are commonly designated as members of the CPPCC (Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference) at the provincial or municipal level, while the majority of parish priests serve at the district or county level. As per Article 28 of the “*Chinese Communist Party Political Consultation Work Regulations*”, each entity is obliged to furnish CPPCC members with the necessary support to perform their duties effectively. see the Central People’s Government of the PRC website: < https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2022-06/20/content_5696832.htm[(https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2022-06/20/content_5696832.htm)]. Additionally, Article 19 of the “*CPPCC Work Rules for Members’ Participation*” outlines the provision of financial support for activities, see <<http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/2019/03/02/ART11551495862779668.shtml>>. Although some bishops may express reservations or criticisms about these arrangements, there is an acknowledgment

der this system, sermons undergo self-censorship, and the Church's autonomy in admitting minors and in fostering religious and priestly vocations is increasingly restricted. One might wonder how those attending the *Primum Concilium Sinense* might react to today's "Chinese-Characteristic Catholicism".

A common question that arises pertains to the quality of the clergy as 'moderators' and 'co-workers' in the ministry of the word, and their ability to proclaim the Gospel of God.⁶⁵ It is noted that "the older generation of clergy, shaped under the 1917 Code of Canon Law and the 1924 *Acta et Decreta*, were rigorously selected and thoroughly trained, with a deeply understanding of the Catholic Church's origins in China and the responsibilities of preserving and advancing this heritage".⁶⁶ However, given China's current Church situation, where clergy formation is challenged by secularization, limited resources, and declining vocations, can we realistically expect more from today's clergy?

Fortunately, the Catholic Church, which was reintroduced to China in 16th century, survived the century-long prohibition during the Qing Dynasty and the decade of turmoil in the last century, yet the Church in China was not completely eradicated. The blood of martyrs is the seed of Faith, and the Holy Spirit comforts the believers. In spite of the ancient adage *ubi episcopus, ibi ecclesia* (where the bishop is, there is the Church), an old Jesuit priest once comforted the faithful of the Shanghai Diocese, which had been without a bishop for over a decade in the new millennium, saying: The Holy Spirit preserves the faithful's *sensus fidei*, and it is Christ who leads the Church!⁶⁷ Indeed, to love God above all else, to emulate the Virgin Mary with "a double spirit" in carrying out God's will, and loyalty to the Pope remain defining aspects of Shanghai Catholics' *sensus fidelium*, by extension, that of the entire Church in mainland China.

However, to ensure that God's people "can proclaim the true faith without error",⁶⁸ Christ entrusted His Apostles and their successors with the responsibility to safeguard, proclaim, defend, interpret, and teach the Gospel.

that it offers a direct avenue or bridge for the Christian to advocate for its interests. Fostering positive relations with the authorities can indeed mitigate biases, prevent persecution, and facilitate the acquisition of benefits for the Church. But it is an undeniable fact that members of the CPPCC enjoy certain political privileges and treatment.

65 *Code of Canon Law*, 756 & 757.

66 See Wang Meixiu, "Insights and Significance of the 1924 Shanghai Council for Today's Catholic Church in Mainland China", unpublished Chinese paper for Macau Conference on June 27, 2024.

67 Fr. Joseph Shi Xingshan (1926-2021) once met me every Sunday when he lived in Shanghai and made this comment.

68 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 890.

Therefore, “the Church is born of the teaching Church”⁶⁹, the Church’s faith should be clear, and the Magisterium should provide explicit instruction and explanations. Without this clarity in the magisterial teaching, the faithful might be left adrift. “The poverty and absence of moral catechesis since the Second Vatican Council is a chief reason why the religious opinions of baptized Catholics today often depart, and sometimes fundamentally, from the truths of divine revelation. It has blunted the sensitivity of the *sensus fidei* of many Catholics making it more likely that putative claims to the *sensus fidei* on moral matters are and have been counterfeit.”⁷⁰

Many Chinese Catholic passionately desire an explicit articulation and steadfastly defense of the *sensus fidei*, rather than simply conforming to the prevailing political or civil currents. However, it is challenging for the clergy to fulfill this role, even for seasoned priest like Fr. Joseph Zhu. As previously mentioned, in response to the lenient and considerate suggestion in the “*Ori-entation*”: “if a Bishop or a priest decides to register civilly, but the text of the declaration required for the registration does not appear respectful of the Catholic faith, he will specify in writing, upon signing, that he acts without failing in his duty to remain faithful to the principles of Catholic doctrine”,⁷¹ Fr. Joseph Zhu was not comfortable with the notion of signing the document without any reservation. He perceived that the strong backing he had from the Holy See had been removed, and in a demonstration of his allegiance to the Holy See and his unwavering commitment to professing his faith, he chose not to sign and to step down from his position. In this context, Cardinal Joseph Zen has voiced a parallel critique, arguing that such an approach is not in line with the Church’s moral principles and could even allow for apostasy. With his voice now muted, these concerns remain unaddressed.⁷²

In recent years, as the Chinese government has strengthened its capacity for social governance, scholars and Church leaders have habitually moderated their speech and engaged in self-censorship. The true voice of the Church in mainland China has been replaced by various forms of high-profile,

69 Paul VI, “Il magistero gerarchico sicurezza per il credente”, General Audience Speech on April 15 1970, see < https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/audiences/1970/documents/hf_p-vi_aud_19700415.html >

70 E.Christian Brugger, “Sensus Fidei, the Magisterium, and the Formation of Conscience”, *Christian and the Law of Conscience*, ed. by Jeffrey B. Hammond & Helen M. Alvare (published online by Cambridge University Press, 2021), 71-92(87).

71 “*Orientations for the Chinese Clergy, Respecting their Freedom of Conscience*”, see VaticanNews, June 28, 2019, < <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2019-06/china-catholic-clergy-state-register-respect-conscience.html> >.

72 Cardinal Joseph Zen, “Orientation for the Chinese Clergy, Respecting their Freedom of Conscience in Question”, *AsiaNews*, July 6, 2019, <<https://www.cccn.org/zhongfan/2019-07-06/68482.html?>>

performative expression. It takes courage to deeply observe and reflect on the current situation, and the voice of the Church in mainland China needs to be “listened to”. The faithful need the opportunity to walk together with the universal Church, thereby awakening *sensu fidelium* on a broad scale .

From *Maximum Illud* to the First National Synod *Primum Concilium Sinenses*: Contributions from the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD)

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Abstract

The Apostolic Delegate Celso Costantini compared the First Plenary Council of China in Shanghai 1924 to Nicaea 325 AD. Probably he is right! Responding comprehensively to Pope Benedict's XV's mission directive *Maximum Illud* (1919) during a time of dramatic, historical transitions in China, the First Plenary Council of China has been convoked to deliberate and decide about significant inculturation issues of inculturation of faith and sinicization of the universal catholic faith in China. The paper focuses on perspectives and contributions by the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) to the planning, conducting, and aftermath of the Shanghai Council 1924.¹

Keywords: Augustin Henninghaus, Christianity in China, colonialism, Celso Costantini, Divine Word Missionaries (SVD), inculturation, *Maximum Illud*, Shanghai Council, Sinicization, Georg Weig.

¹ I express gratitude to Prof. Leo Leeb for his inspiration to write on the First Plenary Council of 1924, primarily through his article on the Shanghai Council: Leo Leeb, "The National Synod of 1924 in Shanghai and the Catholic View of Chinese Culture," *Verbum SVD*, fasciculus 1-2, volume 60 (2019): 42-57. I use his translations from the Latin original in the following passages.

1. The Long and Bumpy Road towards Council of Shanghai 1924

The first plan for a plenary Synod of China emerged in 1846 in letters between Procurator Antonio Feliciani and the Propaganda Fidei in Rome. Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) and his administration promoted synods as tools “to speed up the new start in the missions, to introduce unified mission methods, to erase wrong practices, with one word, to prepare a way for the future.”² The suggested synod title 1846 for China was *Cina et Regni adjacenti*, which amounts to an “Interregional Council of the Far East” convened in Hong Kong.³ It was never realized due to the mounting and truly complex political and inner-ecclesiastical circumstances in the 19th Century.⁴ World history would have turned out differently if it had been accomplished to convene. Feliciani already suggested the idea of an Apostolic Nuntius in the person of Ludovico Conte Besi, the Apostolic Vicar of Shantung and administrator of Nanking, “because it is the opinion of all bishops, without council and an Apostolic Nuntius the many malpractices and disagreements under the apostolic vicars and missionaries could not remedied.”⁵ The papal administration expected from such a General Synod “*immensi vantaggi al successivo miglior andamento, sistemazione piu regolare, progressi ed altro, delle Missioni Cinesi, e Regni adjacenti* (immense advantages to the subsequent better progress, more systematic regulations, progress in the Chinese Missions, and of adjacent Kingdoms).”⁶

An important local Synod took place from 7th November 1851 to 3rd December 1851 in Shanghai, with eight bishops attending under the guidance of Bishop Maresca (1806-1855).⁷ The 12 Plenary Assemblies emphasized already the urgent need to establish a regular catholic hierarchy in China and to overcome the outdated lower-level systems of Apostolic Vicars. It took almost 100 more years to realize this finally in 1946! The erection of formally properly established Church provinces would facilitate and ease the conduct of local and regional meetings. Referring to the positive experiences of establishments of hierarchies in the USA (1808) and in Australia (1842), every civil province of China should become a respective local and formal Church Province. Unfortu-

2 Josef Metzler, *Die Synoden in China, Japan und Korea 1570-1931* (Paderborn-München-Wien-Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1980), p. 65 (tr. Franz Gassner).

3 Metzler, *Synoden*, 68.

4 See the “Chapter 5: Plan of a National Synod (1848-1850)” in Metzler, *Synoden*, pp. 68-76 [in German].

5 Metzler, *Synoden*, 69 (tr. FG).

6 Letter of the SCPF to Feliciani of 21st October 1849 [AP Lettere 338, fol. 360v-362r], quoted from Metzler, *Synoden*, 71.

7 Leeb, “National Synod,” 44.

nately, this was never realized for a long time, also due to the increasing factor of political colonialist interests, more specifically due to the so-called French Protectorate, under which the China mission consolidated for more than half a century as an “Ecclesiastical Colony.”⁸

14 Apostolic Vicars attended the First Vatican Council from the 22 bishops in China, and they discussed there also ecclesiastical matters of China. Vatican I divided China ecclesiastically into five administrative regions, with each region to be requested to organize a regional synod every five years. Subsequently, Region 1 (Zhili, North East China, Mongolia) held synods in 1886, 1892, and 1906. Region 2 (Shandong, Shanxi, Henan, Shaanxi, Gansu) held synods in 1885, 1891, and 1908. Region 3 (Hunan, Hubei, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Jiangman) held synods in 1887 and 1910. Region 4 (Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Tibet) held synods in 1909, and Region 5 (Guangdong, Guangxi, Hongkong, Fujian) held synods in 1880, 1891, and 1909 in Hong Kong.⁹ But, overall, the

striking lack of representation of missionary interest at the First Vatican Council reflected the fact that ecclesiastical circles were caught up in European interests [...]. The real impulse came from outside, especially from the growing and prevailing imperialism and colonialism, in whose wake the missions had recently assumed truly worldwide scope.¹⁰

According to church historians, the Propaganda Fide mission concept at that time was primarily applied to the Near Eastern Churches and to the work among immigrants in the US up until 1908. “The propagation of faith abroad was totally dependent on the colonial power which directly or indirectly dominated the country or the area. All colonies conquered by Russia, even those solely populated by non-Christians, were off-limits to Catholic missions, as were the countries of the Ottoman Empire and its successor states.”¹¹ The German church historian Jakob Baumgartner affirms an “amalgamation of political power and apostolic activities.”¹² During that time, which caused and led to numerous challenges, specifically in the first half of the 20th century, which can be framed by the Boxer Rebellion around 1900 and, finally, the political victory and takeover of China by the Communist Party of China in 1949. In general,

8 Ernest P. Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony: China's Catholic Church and the French Religious Protectorate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

9 Leeb, “National Synod,” 44.

10 Jakob Baumgartner, “Part Three: The Expansion of Catholic Mission from the Time of Leo XIII until World War II”, in: *History of the Church*, ed. Huber Jedin and John Dolan. Volume IX: *The Church in the Industrial Age*, ed. Roger Aubert et al. (New York: Crossroads, 1989): 527.

11 Baumgartner, “Expansion,” 531.

12 Baumgartner, “Expansion,” 531.

many missionaries served, often un-reflected entangled in dependencies on imperialistic and colonial systems.

Everywhere, the missionaries were incorporated into or subjugated to the imperialist system. Real freedom of propagation of the faith barely existed in any of these countries. These facts, which had not been discovered until recently do not mean that the missionaries voluntarily supported the political and economic systems. According to contemporary reports, most missionaries were scarcely aware of the political implications of their work. And even those who seemed to later generations to have been particularly active in the political arena simply wanted to demonstrate their patriotism, which was constantly questioned by the colonial administration.¹³

There were promising initiatives to counter this situation by indigenizing the clergy, emerging already with Pope Leo XIII, who insisted in 1893 to boost the training of native clergy in India because native clergy show a “better acquaintance with the country and its people,” and can overcome the numerical limitations of constantly relying on a minimal number of European missionaries, and, finally, “the possibility that the latter could be expelled from the country.”¹⁴ In his Encyclical Letter on Seminaries *Ad extremas Orientis ora* (June 24th 1893), Leo XIII explicitly stressed this issue in the following words:

The preservation of the Christian faith among the Hindus will be precarious and its propagation uncertain as long as there is not a native clergy properly trained for priestly duties, not only to be of assistance to foreign priests but also *to be in rightful charge of the administration of the Christian Church in their cities*. Tradition tells us that Frances Xavier maintained this same opinion. They say that he used to assert that the Christian cause in India could never have firm roots without the continuing dedication of a pious and zealous clergy native to India. It is evident that he had a keen understanding of the issue. Indeed, the work of the missionaries coming from Europe is beset with many obstacles. Most significantly, indeed, is their unfamiliarity with the vernacular, which is very difficult to learn. There is also the remoteness of institutions and customs, which remain unfamiliar even after a long period. Hence, the European clergy is forced to live there as if they were in a strange land. Since a foreign clergy, therefore, has difficulty in winning the hearts of the people, it is plain that the work of a native clergy would be far more fruitful. From experience, they know the nature and customs of their people; they know when to speak and when to keep silent. In fine, they live

13 Baumgartner, “Expansion,” 531.

14 Baumgartner, “Expansion,” 532, note 27.

among Hindus as Hindus without causing any suspicion, and it is, indeed, difficult to say how important this is, especially in times of crisis.¹⁵

Soon after, following the upheavals of 2 World Wars, these prophetic words became plain reality in the 20th century. In the case of the mission to China, the unjust treatises of the 19th century imposed

by the Western powers marked the beginning of a new era in missionary history. The various agreements paved the way for the mission throughout the entire country and, aside from acceptance and protection, it provided the Church with financial and social advantages. *Yet such missionary policies proved to be harmful as well.* The missionaries made insufficient efforts to fashion the communities with the Chinese spirit and sensitiveness in mind, and many a conversion was inspired by material motives (the so-called rice Christians). In addition, the disciples of a white religion were suspect to the population (e.g., regarding orphanages) and deeply hated by certain segments, especially the Mandarins and scholars, whose national pride was hurt. The resentments exploded during the Boxer uprising in 1900, an incident which cost the lives of thousands of Catholics and numerous priests.¹⁶

A papal legate and a national synod would have been the proper means to address burning issues of context and mission in China. Still, unfortunately, the realization of both plans has been impeded for decades due to multiple factors. In the case of the installation of an official papal legate “French and Portuguese official interventions had blocked it.”¹⁷ To strengthen the ecclesiastical structures in China, the establishment of an own nunciature in Beijing was suggested already in the 19th century, “but the plan proposed by the Chinese failed because France opposed it. Neither under Leo XIII nor under Pius X could the project be realized.”¹⁸ Even up to the 20th century, the French government “had regularly blocked efforts to have an official papal legate in Beijing, although it had sometimes suggested that a purely ‘spiritual’ representative might be tolerable.”¹⁹ Finally, in 1911, the Vatican showed guts and “mandated a preparatory commission for a national synod [to take place in 1914]. However, the Chinese revolution of 1911 and then the world war got in the way, and the

15 Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter on Seminaries for Native Clergy *Ad extremas Orientis ora* (24th June 1893), no. 4. www.vatican.va (access April 28th, 2021); emphasis added by FG.

16 Baumgartner, “Expansion”, 534-535 (emphasis FG).

17 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 226.

18 Baumgartner, “Expansion”, 537.

19 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 224.

project withered.”²⁰

In 1912, the Catholic church in China counted 1.4 Million faithful and 724 native clergy and about twice that of foreign missionaries.²¹ National and congregational interests blocked efforts to address and find substantial answers to the questions posed by the missions for quite a long time. “The France of the Third Republic was itself anticlerical and only maintained its protectorate over the Chinese missions so as to promote French interests abroad.”²²

Strong initiatives of new approaches and methods regarding the missionary method emerged in China itself, aiming at “thorough indigenization” and turning away from Europeanism, promoted by pioneers like Fr. Vincent Lebbe (1877-1940). The Tientsin Crisis in 1916 “can be described as a catalyst which helped to kick-start and accelerated the whole process of mission reforms.”²³ Although Fr. Vincent Lebbe was subsequently forced to leave China, this crisis ushered in an effective process of transformation regarding the mission in China, specifically in the follow-up of the appointed visitor Claude Guilloux: “At the end of his visit and colloquium with some of the principal characters in that crisis on the religious aspect of it, Guilloux concluded that it was up to Rome and Propaganda Fide to resolve the serious issues and difficulties that ensued from the French Protectorate in China, the emancipation of the native clergy and their elevation to the episcopate and the approval or not of the new method of evangelization favored by Lebbe and his fellow Tientsin missionaries.”²⁴ Rome finally spoke, and parts of Lebbe’s ideas “were incorporated into the missionary encyclical of Benedict XV, *Maximum illud*.”²⁵

1919 marked the devastating Treaty of Versailles, and upon its renewed and grave unjust treatment of China – among other factors – the May 4th Movement was sparked in China, “when 5000 students of Peking University took to the streets to protest against the decision of the Versailles Treaty, ending World War I, which granted the German Concession in Shandong Province to Japan, China’s mortal enemy.”²⁶ This very imprudent treatment of China

20 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 226.

21 Baumgartner, “Expansion”, 535.

22 Jean-Pierre Charbonnier, *Christians in China: A.D. 600 To 2000*, tr. M.N.L. Couve de Murville (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 388.

23 Valentine Ugochukwo Iheanacho, *Maximum Illud and Benedict XV’s Missionary Thinking: Prospects of a Local Church in Mission Territories* (Saarbrücken: Scholar’s Press, 2015), 298-299.

24 Ugochukwo Iheanacho, *Maximum Illud and Benedict XV’s Missionary Thinking*, 299.

25 Baumgartner, “Expansion,” 537, note 34.

26 Editorial, Double Centenaries of May 4th and “Maximum Illud”, *Tripod*, Vol. XXXIX/no. 194 (Autumn 2019), 64.

in Versailles led the Chinese Delegation to leave without signing. More and more, Chinese intellectuals realized that China could no longer “depend on Western Powers for support and that China must build itself up on its own.”²⁷ This, of course, nourished the growing patriotism and nationalism and sparked strong anti-Christian movements of the 1920s.²⁸ “Already in 1922, new movements of intellectuals and students were refurbishing animadversions against Christianity and its missions for being political instruments of imperialism and were adding charges of cultural aggression and subversion of Chinese identity.”²⁹ For sure this general situation also channeled ideological support into the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 in Shanghai, a development which culminated historically on 1st October 1949 with Chairman Mao Tse-tung proclaiming at Tiananmen Square: “The Chinese People have stood up!”³⁰

2. Celso Costantini and the Implementation of

Maximum Illud in China

Only after the catastrophic experience of World War, I became it finally possible for the Vatican to aim at the realization of the so-long delayed First Plenary National Synod of China and to think about the installation of an Apostolic Delegate. In 1919, Pope Benedict XV published the Encyclical Letter *Maximum Illud*, requesting and insisting urgently upon the training and ordination of native priests. He deplored

the effects of European nationalism on the Catholic Church in China and called for eventual church administration by the Chinese clergy. The missionary clergy in China [mostly foreigners] gave the letter a lukewarm response.³¹

Archbishop Celso Costantini was appointed in August 1922 as Apostolic Delegate to China to oversee the genuine implementation of *Maximum Illud*.

27 Editorial, Double Centenaries of May 4th and “Maximum Illud”, *Tripod*, Vol. XXXIX/no. 194 (Autumn 2019), 64.

28 Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Mission: The Anti-Christian Movement of 1920-28* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Cross Cultural Publications, 1988).

29 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 228.

30 Editorial, Double Centenaries of May 4th and “Maximum Illud”, *Tripod*, Vol. XXXIX/no. 194 (Autumn 2019), 64.

31 E. O. Hanson, *Catholic Politics in China and Korea* (New York: Orbis Books, 1980), p. 22, quoted from Lam, “Archbishop Costantini,” 43.

His primary task was “the growth of an indigenous clergy and its assumption of greater responsibilities.”³² Costantini’s appointment had to be cautiously prepared to overcome any possible political obstacles, especially from the French Protectorate. Thus, his appointment had to proceed top secret until he arrived in Hong Kong:

Before arriving in China, he was not to reveal his identity. He could not even tell his own mother. In fact, when he was leaving home, he could only tell her that he was going to a far-off place to preach the Gospel.³³

Cardinal Van Rossum urged him to make “every effort to implement the thought of the encyclical *Maximum Illud*. The most urgent matter is to hold the National Council of bishops meeting as soon as possible.”³⁴

Costantini condensed for himself the following five principles inspired by *Maximum Illud*:

1. The representative of the Holy See is purely a religious person. His position should have no political flavor.
2. Be friendly and nice with everyone, no matter if they are Chinese officials or foreign diplomats. Preserve one’s own independence. Do not concern oneself with the advantages of the foreign powers. I am under the Pope, and serve only the Pope.
3. The Holy See does not get involved in politics. Sometimes politics enters religious circles, but that is only temporary.
4. The Holy See has no imperial ambitions in China. There is no connection between the politics of the foreign powers and the Holy See. The Holy See is concerned about China and hopes that China will become strong. It advocates China belonging to the Chinese.
5. The church is universal because its work is service. The Church has as a principle that local priests should be made bishops. After the establishment of the local hierarchy, the responsibilities of the missionaries can be considered completed. They should go as soon as possible to another place and open up new fields for mission.³⁵

Given avoiding direct connection with foreign political powers in China, Costantini set up his Apostolic Delegation in the Legation Quarters. “When he

32 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 225.

33 Francis Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” *Tripod* Vol. XXVIII, no. 148 (Spring 2008), 48-55, here 48-49.

34 As quoted by Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” 48-49.

35 As quoted from Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” 49-50.

went to visit the Chinese Foreign Minister, Gu Weijun, he also explained how the Church's stand differed from that of the foreign powers. The Church points out to people the real meaning of life and the moral power of faith. She does not bother with other things."³⁶ Stephen Aguirre y Ottegai summarizes the position of Archbishop Costantini upon arrival in China:

His appointment in 1922 signaled two things. First, the Vatican wanted the Chinese Church to rely less on foreign protection and handle its relation with civil authorities through its own Church channels. However, to respect diplomatic conventions, more in particular the French protectorate, the representative was not given official status. Costantini was a semi-official delegate only, not a full nuncio. Secondly, through its delegate, the Vatican wanted to bring more Chinese clergy in position of command. Soon after his arrival, Costantini established the first mission led by Chinese priests. Twenty-five years later, the delegate's efforts had succeeded. In 1943 full diplomatic relations were established between China and the Vatican; in 1946 a regular ecclesiastical hierarchy was set up in the country, replacing the temporary and foreign led vicarates.³⁷

According to the German SVD missionary Fr. Georg Weig, Costantini was the right man at the right place and time, when he writes in a letter in August 8th, 1923 after the Wuchang meeting:

I got to know the Apostolic Delegate [Celso Costantini] in Wuchang at the Preparatory Meeting for the Shanghai Synod next year. I think that he is the right man on the spot, who can advance the mission carriage of China. He will not experience a lack of resistance from Bishops and missionaries! Unfortunately, their attitude is still widely 'negative.' We have been together in Wuchang for four weeks, 21 missionaries from all parts of China, from all orders and congregations. It was not easy to bring these people together, and a different person than the Delegate could not have accomplished it. Without him, a National Synod next year would not take place, because a considerate number of Bishops is against it. They want to muddle on with the old pattern. My trips in the last 2 years (to Tientsin, Peking, Shanghai, Wuchang-Hanksdow) revealed to me something. It is undeniable, that with the visitation of Msgr. Guebriant a new era in the Chinese Mission has arrived. We escaped stagnation (sluggishness), the carriage rolls on again,

36 Chong, "Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church," 50.

37 Stephen Aguirre y Ottegai, *History of the Diocese of Xiwanzi under the C.I.C.M. Fathers (1865-1950).*" In: Jerom Hendricks, C.I.C.M. (ed.), *Historiography of the Chinese Catholic Church: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century*, Loevain Chinese Studies I (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation/K.U. Leuven, 1994), 273-284, here 281.

not without great groaning.³⁸

The church in China needed to address urgently the negative impact of the colonialist transnational French Protectorate and learn to respond properly and constructively to the new challenges of the Chinese Nation in the midst of an epochal transition period and growing Chinese patriotism.

Required steps included appointing Chinese bishops, forswearing any great-power protectorate for the Chinese faithful, and restricting official foreign protection of missionaries to one's own nationality. If some, such as Belgian or Spanish missionaries, wished to continue resorting to French protection, they would not be barred by the policy of the Holy See, but Chinese Catholics must not be included.³⁹

Costantini personally never “acceded to the official French wish that he be accompanied by diplomats on his visits with Chinese authorities.”⁴⁰ The traditional *koutou*, or kneeling or prostration by the Chinese faithful upon meeting their priests, was abolished, the display of the missionary's national flag was discouraged, and the designation of foreign priests as “apostolic” missionaries was withdrawn, to eliminate inequality in form of “their precedence over Chinese priests”.⁴¹ Further, missions “should not seek indemnities for the killing of missionaries,”⁴² which was wise, but in fact, too little too late. “By the late 1940s, the Communists understood the Chinese Boxers killed by foreign troops as symbols of true opposition to the imperialist missionary who had continued to gain unfair stature by way of the Boxer indemnities exacted after 1900.”⁴³ Traveling from Hong Kong to Shanghai in late 1922, Costantini reflected on a “totally foreign-led church, he observed, made Catholicism look foreign to the Chinese. He judged that a church could not be based on foreign supervision and protection.”⁴⁴

38 Letter by Fr. Georg Weig SVD from Yenchow on 19th August 1923 to Fr. Friedrich in Rome, quoted from: Richard Hartwich, SVD, *Steyler Missionare in China: V. Aus Kriegeruinen zu neuen Grenzen 1920-1923 – Beiträge zu einer Geschichte* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1989), p. 343. [tr. from the German FG].

39 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 228.

40 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 234.

41 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 235.

42 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 235. “By the late 1940s, the Communists understood the Chinese Boxers killed by foreign troops as symbols of true opposition to the imperialist missionary who had continued to gain unfair stature by way of the Boxer indemnities exacted after 1900.”

43 Robert E. Carbonneau, “Part Two: Republican China. 2. The Actors. 2.1. The Catholic Church in China 1900-1949,” in: Rolf Gerhard Tiedemann (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in China. Volume Two: 1800 to the Present*. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 516-525, here 517.

44 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 226.

3. The Synod of Shanghai 1924:

The First Plenary Council of China

To convene a plenary Council for China was the first and foremost urgent task as Delegate according to Cardinal van Rossum. Pope Pius XI himself commissioned Costantini “the duty of gathering together in the city of Shanghai all the Vicars and Prefects Apostolic of China, and of presiding in His name over the Council.”⁴⁵ Van Rossum also ordered for this meeting, that “there should be no act that might indicate acknowledgment of foreign protectorates, and there should be no flags displayed except those of the pope and of China.”⁴⁶

The Opening Ceremony was held on May 15th 1924 in the Cathedral St. Ignatius, Xujiahui, Shanghai. “Some 115 members of the Council, belonging to different nationalities and Religious Orders, coming from all parts of China, met for the first time in a General Assembly since the Gospel was introduced into China many centuries previously.”⁴⁷ All people and faithful could see “with their own eyes the catholicity of the Church, and understand that she is a supernational organization transcending racial interests and national boundaries.”⁴⁸ At that time there were 55 Apostolic Vicariates in China, 2552 priests, with 1071 native priests and some “two million Catholics attending religious services.”⁴⁹ 50 Bishops attended the Synod in Shanghai and 58 priests, among them only 11 native priests. “These men decided upon 861 stipulations concerning the education of clergy and lay people, the sacraments, the liturgy, mission methods, lawsuits, etc. These decisions which guided the ecclesiastical life in the following two decades were recorded in Latin.”⁵⁰

One crucial and important aspect in regard to the preparation of the First National Synod of China was the selection of two new Chinese leaders or apostolic prefects. Reverend Odoric Cheng Hede (成和德 1873 - 1928) and Reverend Melchior Sun Dezhen (孫德禎 1869–1951) were appointed prefect apostolic by Pope Pius XI in March and April 1924, just weeks before the Council of Shanghai opened on May 15th 1924. “Although the two Chinese prelates were

45 Lam, “Archbishop Costantini,” 29.

46 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 227.

47 Lam, “Archbishop Costantini,” 29.

48 Lam, “Archbishop Costantini,” 29, referring to Pasquale M. D.’Elia, *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China, being an outline of the formation and growth of the Chinese Catholic clergy (1800-1926)*. Shanghai, 1927.

49 Leeb, “National Synod of 1924,” 45.

50 Leeb, “National Synod of 1924,” 45. Prof. Leeb also states there, that “unfortunately, the book was never translated into Chinese or any other language, thus Chinese historians have little access to the contents of this important document.”

an absolute minority among the dozens of foreign missionary church leaders, their presence carried the strong symbolic meaning that this was a Plenary Council ‘for’ the Chinese and, to some extent, ‘by’ the Chinese.”⁵¹ Archbishop Costantini clarified this explicitly in his homily at the Opening Ceremony:

Among you there are two Chinese Prelates, recently raised to the Dignity of Prefects Apostolic; these, Venerable Brethren, are the fruit of your past labours, the grain of mustard that will grow into a large tree, and bring forth abundant fruit in the future. We all share the same unity of faith and disciple, and obey the same visible Head on earth, our Holy Father the Pope.⁵²

Besides these first two indigenous Chinese prelates as members of the hierarchy, there were other 9 Chinese priests appointed to serve as consulting theologians in the 5 different Synodal Commissions, in addition of taking on other crucial functions necessary for conducting the Plenary Council, and, even more importantly, “five of the nine Chinese priests became bishops. One of them even became archbishop when the Chinese Catholic Hierarchy was established in 1946.”⁵³ One participating priest was Philippus Zhao, who was already selected as personal Secretary by Costantini upon his arrival in China 1922 and who took on his Secretary Office on January 8th 1923. After serving in the Council he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Xuanhwa (Zhili) on May 10th 1926, and was ordained in Rome on October 28th 1926 with 5 other Chinese Priests by Pope Pius XI. He chose as his Episcopal Motto: “I will sacrifice myself to the last breath.” Anthony Lam summarizes his episcopal ministry in the following words:

It was not long before he put his episcopal motto into practice. In 1929 [it must have been in 1927. FG], a civil war broke out in the area around Hebei and Inner Mongolia. The refugees had nowhere to go but to the Catholic cathedral. One night, Bishop Chao walked around the cathedral to see the refugees. He found them in such a miserable condition that he gave them his big robe. He caught a chill instantly. Unfortunately, the resulting cold reactivated a long illness. He failed to recover and passed away. He had been a bishop for only eight months.⁵⁴

51 Lam, “Archbishop Costantini,” 30 (emphasis FG).

52 Pasquale M. D.’Elia, *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China, being an outline of the formation and growth of the Chinese Catholic clergy (1800-1926)*. Shanghai, 1927, p. 72, quoted from Lam, “Archbishop Costantini,” 44.

53 Lam, “Archbishop Costantini,” 36, see also the short biographies by Anthony Lam in his insightful article.

54 Lam, “Archbishop Costantini,” 38.

Regarding the timing of the First National Synod, the time was truly right and ripe. “On the contrary, instead of waiting for a better environment, the Plenary Council itself created that better environment. We can say that the Plenary Council sped up the process of the indigenization of the Catholic Church in China.”⁵⁵ “The encouraging act of Pius XI in consecrating six Chinese bishops [in 1926] was, as anticipated, only the beginning of the sinification of the Chinese mission. The time was very appropriate, just when Chinese national consciousness had reached its climax in the nineteen-twenties. Gradually the Chinese were put in command of the vicariates and prefectures, and their staff of priests were in some cases entirely Chinese.”⁵⁶

4. Selected Aspects of Inculturation & Sinification of the Synod of Shanghai 1924

Following the guidance given by the papal encyclical *Maximum Illud*, “the Council Fathers discussed a unified missionary direction, adapted to the Chinese nation and people.”⁵⁷ Because the Council “was not subject to any foreign influence”⁵⁸ it could “reorganize priorities,” meaning, “nationality and citizenship were to be secondary to the Gospel. Chinese clergy and missionaries were to have equal rights. Chinese was to be the primary language. Religious women were to be employed to educate girls. Education in schools and universities was affirmed. Chinese customs were not to be criticized.”⁵⁹

On the level of the administration of hierarchy and Church, “Costantini succeeded in establishing the two local Chinese prefectures of Puqi and Lixian, with Monsignors Odoricsu Cheng Hede and Melchior Sun Dezhen as prefects in charge. Establishing these two local Chinese prefectures was the first step in the localization of the Chinese Church. Before 1924 all the ecclesiastical territories were supervised by foreign vicars and prefects. There was not even the shadow of a Chinese prelate on the scene. Although there was a Chinese bishop, Luo Wenzao (ordained in 1685), during the time of the Kangxi Emper-

55 Lam, “Archbishop Costantini,” 43.

56 Columba Carl-Elwes, OSB, *China and the Cross: A Survey of Missionary History* (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1957), 240-241.

57 Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” 51.

58 Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” 51.

59 Robert E. Carbonneau, “Part Two: Republican China. 2. The Actors. 2.1. The Catholic Church in China 1900-1949,” in: Rolf Gerhard Tiedemann (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in China. Volume Two: 1800 to the Present* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 516-525, here 520.

or, this was only a one-off event.”⁶⁰

Learning the local language is fundamental for Divine Word Missionaries (SVD). In the stipulation in Chapter 33 (“On Learning Mandarin Chinese”), the Synod 1924 demands to study Chinese well:

*166. Missionarii ad Sinas accedentes existiment ita sibi studio linguae vernaculae incumbendum esse, non ut quadam modica cognitione contenti sint, sed ita ut expedite et emendate loqui possint. Quod primi sui ad Sinas adventus Missionarii insumunt tempus ad addiscendam linguam, postea ad usuram lucrabuntur, et donum linguae, per totum vitae spatium, eorum honestabit ministerium ac facilius efficaciusque reddet. Quapropter Patres concilii opportunum consent statuere ut novi Missionarii saltem primo anno, nullis aliis plerumque distenti curis, et designato magistro qui status temporibus lectiones illis tradat, incumbent studio linguae...Et quantum fieri potest, studio characterum sinensium se dedant.*⁶¹

166. Missionaries who come to China should see it as a duty to study the vernacular language in such a way that they are not satisfied with a limited command of the language but that they can speak it with ease and refinement. As the missionaries spend some time upon their arrival in China to learn the language, they will be later rewarded for these studies, since the gift of the language will ennoble their ministry and make it easier and more effective. Therefore, the participants of this council decide that new missionaries should be given at least one year in which they are free from other worries and can devote themselves to the study of the language. They should also be given a teacher who prepares regular lessons for them.⁶²

In the minor and major seminaries, a general high standard of language learning is the clear aim among the Chinese seminarians, especially in regard to Latin and the native language.

672, no. 4: Doceatur lingua latina ea ratione quae alumnos ad stadium philosophiae et theologiae praeparet: adeoque cum ex auctoribus classicis aureae aetatis, tum ex SS. Patribus, ne neglectis quidem nonnullis hymnis

60 Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” 51.

61 Concilium Sinense, *Primum Concilium Sinense* Anno 1924: A Die 14 Maii Ad Diem 12 Iunii In Ecclesia S. Ignatii de Zi-Ka-Wei Celebratum: Acta, Decreta et Normae, Vota, etc. (Zi-Ka-Wei: Typographia Missionis Catholicae, 1929), Titulus XXXIII: De studio linguae vernaculae, no. 166, p. 61. (henceforth abbreviated by PCS);

62 The English translation from the Latin follows Leo Leeb, “National Synod of 1924,” 45-46. I am grateful to Prof. Leo Leeb for his kind permission.

672, no. 4: The Latin language should be taught because it prepares the alumni for the study of philosophy and theology, and they should read the authors of the classical golden age of Roman literature, as well as the texts of the Fathers of the Church, and of course also some liturgical hymns and selected readings from the Roman Breviary.⁶⁴

The Synod Fathers also expressed their concern for developing a proper Bible translation into Chinese and a unification of Prayer Books and Catechism.⁶⁵

*35. Primum Concilium Sinense censet constituendum esse secundum comitatum, ex pluribus missionariis et sacerdotibus sinensibus constantem, cuius officium sit Sacras Scripturas, easque integras, in Sinicam linguam vertere.*⁶⁶

35. The First Synod of China decides that a commission should be formed, consisting of several missionaries and Chinese priests, whose task is to translate the whole Bible into the Chinese language.⁶⁷

The Synod worked to unify the much-used catechism and prayer books in its Articles 39-48 which was perceived to be even more urgent than the translation of the Bible.⁶⁸

Maximum Illud urges that native priests are offered the same education as to their foreign confreres. The Synod of Shanghai evaluated and confirmed explicitly the position of native clergy and their equality to foreign clergy in its Articles 131 and 132:

*131. Nullum officium clero indigenae, dummodo idoneo, praecluditur.*⁶⁹

63 PCS, Liber Quartus: De Evangelizatioinis Opere, Caput VII: De Seminario Minori, 672, no. 4., 215.

64 English Translation from Leeb, "National Synod of 1924," 46-47.

65 The first full translation of the New Testament was made by MEP missionary Jean Basset (1662-1707), and the Jesuit Fr. Louis de Poiret, SJ (1735-1813) produced translations of the Bible into Chinese and Manchu. For Robert Morrison (1782-1834) the translation of Basset was important for his own Bible translation. There was "no universally accepted Bible translation before the year 1968, when Fr. Allegra published the 'Studium Biblicum Franciscanum' Bible in Hong Kong." Leeb, "National Synod of 1924," 47-48.

66 PCS, Liber Primus: Normae Generales, Titulus VIII: De Commissionibus, Caput II: De peritorum Commissione seu Comitatu pro versione Sinica Sacrarum Scripturarum, no. 35, 33.

67 Quoted from Leeb, "National Synod of 1924," 48.

68 Leeb, "National Synod of 1924," 48.

69 PCS, Liber Secundus: De Personis et Officiis, Art. 131, 55.

131. A native priest, if he is capable, should not be precluded from any ecclesiastical office.⁷⁰

132. *Primum Concilium Sinense libenti animo quae canon 305 docet amplectitur. Imo maxime cupit ut quam citissime illa dies illuscescat qua Sacerdotes sinenses etiam in episcopos eligantur.*⁷¹

132. The First Chinese Synod wholeheartedly embraces canon 305. And it eagerly longs to see the day when Chinese priests will be nominated Bishops.⁷²

Canon 305 of the *CIC* 1917 stipulates:

Studiosissime curent, onerata graviter eorum conscientia, ut ex christianis indigenis seu incolis suae regionis probati clerici rite instituantur ac sacerdotio initientur.

They must studiously take care, their conscience being gravely burdened, that, from among the indigenous Christians or inhabitants of their region, suitable clerics be formed and initiated into priesthood.⁷³

In its Articles 642 and 648, the Synod of 1924 formulated even in a stronger form, that the Church is to be “built upon the native clergy” (*pro Ecclesia e clero indigena condenda*) in view of which proper “preparatory colleges and seminaries” are necessary to be established, in which “young clergymen can grow in piety and knowledge. (*in quibus novus clerus, pietate optime instituentus et scientia, adolescat ac magisque crescat.*”⁷⁴

Overall, Celso Costantini turned out to be far-sighted in regard to the field of education. “At the first synod of the Chinese Catholic Church in 1924, one decision taken was that in different areas of China, the Church would establish 14 regional seminaries. The purpose would be to offer a higher quality of education in philosophy and theology to youth seeking to follow the path to priesthood.”⁷⁵ John Cardinal Tong concludes, that “it was not until the first synod of the Chinese Catholic Church in 1924, and at the urging of the Apostolic Dele-

⁷⁰ Quoted from Leeb, “National Synod of 1924,” 50.

⁷¹ *PCS*, Liber Secundus: De Personis et Officiis, Art. 132, 55.

⁷² Quoted from Leeb, “National Synod of 1924,” 50.

⁷³ *Codex Iuris Canonici*, Pii X Pontificis Maximi, iussu digestus; Benedicti Papae XV, auctoritate promulgatus (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1918); English translation: *The 1917 or Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law*, tr. Edward N. Peters (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001).

⁷⁴ Quoted from Leeb, “National Synod of 1924,” 50; Latin: *PCS*, Liber Quartus, De Evangelizationis Opere, no. 642 (p. 208) and no. 648 (p. 210).

⁷⁵ Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” 53.

gate Celso Costantini, that an overall plan was drawn up to establish fourteen regional seminaries. In 1949 there were sixteen regional seminaries throughout the country, and many local major and minor seminaries.”⁷⁶ Costantini put also a strong emphasis on education in Chinese culture. “He urged seminarians and young priests to conscientiously study Mandarin Chinese (*baihua*), so that later when they were preaching the Gospel, they would sound convincing. He also encouraged the bishops and heads of missions to send suitable seminarians and young priests to Beijing’s Furen University, Shanghai’s Zhendan University, or any other university to study Chinese and the Humanities.”⁷⁷ He facilitated to send seminarians to Rome to study at the Urbanianum University. When Costantini left China in 1933, “he had sent over 40 seminarians to Rome for further studies.”⁷⁸ Among them were Yu Bin [于斌], later Archbishop of Nan-king and Cardinal, and Fan Xueyan [範學淹], later Bishop of Baoding 保定, Luo Guang, Du Baojin and others. Many became outstanding leaders of the Catholic Church of China.

The positive approach and attitude towards Chinese culture and language can also be seen in other Synod articles, including the emphasis on cultural anthropology for priest and missionaries, of special relevance for Divine Word Missionaries. The Synod admonished foreigners to honor positive cultural elements of the Chinese Culture and to refrain from critical remarks:

694. *Nostrum non est Sinensium defectus verbis aut scriptis denuntiare, multoque minus mores, institua, legesue, quae non sint aperte mala, in damnationem aut in contemptionem adducere.*

*Quod si quando malas consuetudines describere necesse sit, vel iniurias contra nostrum S. Religionem ac Missiones refellere, semper cum caritate agatur; qua non tantum iudicis sed patris magistrique animus elucescat: ut Sinenses sibi persuasum habeant nos sincere in eos impelli amore, etiam dum eos obiurgamus ut a vitiis corrigantur.*⁷⁹

694. It is not our duty to denounce the shortcomings of the Chinese, nor should we condemn or despise customs or rules which are not obviously evil.

But if it is necessary to talk about bad habits or to defend our Faith against

76 John Tong [Archbishop Cardinal], “Seminary Formation in China Today and Prospectus for the Future,” in: Jeroom Heyndrickx (ed.), *Historiography of the Chinese Catholic Church: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, 1994), pp. 159-168, here 159.

77 Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” 53-54.

78 Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” 54.

79 PCS, Liber Quartus: De Evangelizationis Opere, Art. 694, 221.

attacks, then it should always be in a loving way, showing not so much the authority of a judge, but rather of a father and a teacher, so that the Chinese believe that we are motivated by love, even if we scold them so that they correct their vices.⁸⁰

696: *Quae bona sunt in Sinensium moribus, ex. Gr. Pietas filialis, debitis honestentur laudibus.*⁸¹

The positive elements in Chinese customs, such as filial piety, should be honored with due praise.⁸²

The Synod also mentions the relevance of indigenous culture in music and architecture, in which Celso Costantini showed special interest and expertise due to his previous ministry in Italy:⁸³

525. *Musica Sinica in ecclesiis admitti potest, dummodo non sit profana, et tempore et more debito perficiatur. Excluduntur vero ordinarie, in Missionum ecclesiis, cantica in lingua Missionariorum propria.*⁸⁴

525. Chinese music can be admitted in the churches, as long as it is not profane, and if it is performed in the proper time and suitable way. However, in the mission churches songs in the native language of the missionaries are normally excluded.⁸⁵

453. *In aedificandis et ornandis sacris aedibus et residentiis missionariorum non tantum exterarum artis forma adhibeatur, sed, quantum fieri potest, nativa etiam sinensis gentis artis species, pro opportunitate, servetur.*⁸⁶

80 Quoted from Leeb, "National Synod of 1924," 51.

81 PCS, Liber Quartus: De Evangelizationis Opere, Art. 696, 222.

82 Quoted from Leeb, "National Synod of 1924," 51.

83 J. C. Willke, "Costantini, Celso," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume IV (New York et al.: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 366-367. Costantini acquired a lot of knowledge and skills in preserving sacred before, during, and after World War I, for instance as conservator of the ancient basilica of Aquileia, Italy, in founding the society Amici dell' Arte Sacra, and in initiating the illustrated art review Arte cristiana (p. 366). In regard to adaption to native Chinese styles in the case of the Catholic University in Peking, see the critical evaluation of his adaption to native styles in architecture by R. Le Clair, "Missionary Art," in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume IX (New York et al.: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 907-919, here 908: "The idea had elements of value but was vitiated by the fact that 'adaption' was understood in the light of another copy – this time, of native styles. If the basic idea had been one of assimilation and transformation in the hands of intelligent, progressive practitioners, missionary art might have witnessed a flowering of a vital and creative art."

84 PCS, Liber Tertius: De Rebus, Pars Tertia: De Culto Divino, Titulus XVII: De musica sara et cantu gregoriano, Art. 525, 178.

85 Quoted from Leeb, "National Synod of 1924," 55.

86 PCS, Liber Tertius: De Rebus, Pars Secunda: De Locis et Temporibus Sacris, Titulus X: De Locis sacris, Art. 453, p. 160.

453. For the construction and embellishment of sacred halls [churches] and missionary residences not only foreign patterns and forms should be used, but also, as much as possible, native shapes and expressions of the Chinese nation, if it is opportune.⁸⁷

51. Item, si missionarii monumenta geologica, paleontologica, archeologica, historica, artistica et cetera huiusmodi invenerint, haec servant; auxiliumque praebeant, si quis missionariorum, ex Superiorum mandato, in iisdem studiis versatur.⁸⁸

51. Also, if missionaries find geological, paleontological, archeological, historical, artistic and other monuments, they should preserve them; they should also help those missionaries who, by order of their superiors, conduct studies in these areas.⁸⁹

The implementation of the fundamental reforms of *Maximum Illud* turned out to be heavy in China, “against the dead weight of a tradition of over three centuries and against the power and property of the congregations.”⁹⁰ But Costantini sowed plenty mustard seeds in his efforts to implement *Maximum Illud*. The stipulations of the First National Synod of China respect the native Chinese culture and the native clergy, and opened a way for proper Sinicization:

Seen from the historical background of the ‘Anti-Christian Movement’ of 1922 and the extreme anti-foreign protests of 1925 and 1927, when huge numbers of Protestant missionaries left China, the Synod arrived at mature decisions and showed a spirit of prudence, fairness and farsightedness.⁹¹

Costantini challenged the status quo of the outdated but still dominating French Protectorate. “By 1928, the [...] French minister to China was characterizing Costantini as an open enemy of the French Religious Protectorate and a friend of the new Nationalist Party government.”⁹² Despite his own efforts and the efforts of two popes, “the French government could still work its will on major matters regarding the Catholic Church in China.”⁹³ Many im-

87 Quoted from Leeb, “National Synod of 1924,” 55.

88 PCS, Liber Primus: Normae Generalis, Art. 51, 37.

89 “51. Item, si missionarii monumenta geologica, paleontologica, archeologica, historica, artistica et cetera huiusmodi invenerint, haec servant; auxiliumque praebeant, si quis missionariorum, ex Superiorum mandato, in iisdem studiis versatur.” Quoted from: Leeb, “National Synod of 1924,” 55.

90 Celso Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933): memorie di fatti e di idee* [With the missionaries in China, 1922-1933: memories of events and views], 2 vols. (Rome: Unione Missionaria del Clero in Italia, 1946), 2:379, quoted from Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 243.

91 Leeb, “National Synod of 1924,” 56.

92 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 236.

93 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 242.

provements went ahead slowly but firmly and steadily. Costantini went ahead with the careful selection of 6 episcopal candidates and travelled himself with them on 10th of September 1926 from Shanghai to Rome. “On October 26th, 1926, Pope Pious XI consecrated this first group of local Chinese bishops to the episcopacy in St. Peter’s Basilica. With the Holy Father himself conducting the ordination of the first group of Chinese bishops, the foundation for the future development of the indigenization of the Church was established.”⁹⁴ After planting the missions and Gospel for centuries, finally the church itself could be planted with this crucial nucleus of a native Chinese episcopacy.⁹⁵ “When he left China for the last time [1933], he could point to the nineteen percent of ecclesiastical units in the country that were headed by Chinese priests, twenty-three of 121, up from zero when he first came [1922].”⁹⁶

5. Perspectives from the First Plenary Council 1924

by Fr. Georg Weig SVD



Figure 1: Opening page of the article on the Shanghai Synod by Fr. Georg Weig SVD (*Lector Actionis* at the Council 1924). He published the article in 1924 in the German Magazine *Katholische Missionen*, Bd. 53 (1924-1925), S. 3-10. I am grateful to Dr. Barbard Hoster (Monumenta Serica Institute, St. Augustin, Germany) to have made the article available.

In the following, I bring the contemporary perspective on the immediate preparation and conduct of the First Plenary Council 1924 by the Council member Fr. Georg Weig SVD, who was *Lector Actionis* at the Council. Immediately after the end of World War I, the preparation went ahead with the Visitation of

94 Chong, “Cardinal Celso Costantini and the Chinese Catholic Church,” 52.

95 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 243.

96 Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony*, 243.

Jean-Baptiste-Marie Budes de Guébriant, M.E.P. taking place from 1919-1920. After the visitation, in 1921, a big Questionnaire was sent by the Vatican to all Bishops in China, requesting them to discuss the important issues with their missionaries in view of an excellent preparation for the upcoming Synod. In addition, in 1922, seven regional meetings have been conducted according to 7 regions. In June 1923, the preparatory Meeting of 21 Consultatores took place under the leadership of the newly appointed Delegate Costantini in Wuhang, and Fr. Georg Weig SVD took part in this meeting as Delegate of Bishop Henninghaus of South-Shantung. From every of the 7 regions, 3 priests have been selected, 2 Europeans and 1 Chinese.

The consultations of this conference have been first submitted to Rome and then about two months before the begin of the Plenary Council have been sent to all, who are going to participate in the council for their preparation.⁹⁷

In this way, every bishop was kept full in the picture and could prepare himself and his clerics properly and accordingly for the upcoming First Plenary Council of China. According to Weig: “Thanks to these measures, the discussions during the Council have been eased significantly (*wurden sehr erleichtert*) and the duration of the Council could be limited to a relatively short time.”⁹⁸ The Pope himself expected “great things for the future of the Church in China,” as expressed in a secret Consistorium on March 24th 1924.⁹⁹

The Opening Ceremony on 15th May 1924 in the large St. Ignatius Church in Zikawei was impressive in the presence of 45 bishops, 4 Apostolic Prefects (among them 2 recently appointed Chinese Prelates), 1 Apostolic Administrator and one Abbot. 2 Bishops and 1 Administrator arrived one day later. 7 bishops have been prevented to join, but have sent their Procurator. In addition, 35 missionaries attended, in the role of being religious superior, secretary, theologian, or in another function.¹⁰⁰ Among the religious, were 18 Franciscans, 10 MEPs, 10 Lazarists. From the German Bishops, only Bishop Henninghaus was present. Bishop Walleser was sick, and Schmuecker joined later upon returning from his journey to America, and Bishop Sauer OSP from Korea was invited but not present (the territory of his diocese included a part of China).

97 Georg Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” In *Katholische Missionen* 53 (1924-1925) [Aachen: Xaverius-Verlagsbuchshandlung, 1925], 3-10, here 3.

98 Georg Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” In *Katholische Missionen* 53 (1924-1925) [Aachen: Xaverius-Verlagsbuchshandlung, 1925], 3-10, here 3.

99 Georg Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” In *Katholische Missionen* 53 (1924-1925) [Aachen: Xaverius-Verlagsbuchshandlung, 1925], 3-10, here 3.

100 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 3. Translated from German by FG.

In the “impressive 3 hours long Opening Ceremony” (Solemn Mass of the Holy Spirit, Homily of the Apostolic Delegate, Oath Taking of the Delegate and the Members of the Synod; Reading of the Opening Statement and names of the Synod members), the Apostolic Delegate compared this First Plenary Council 1924 of all of China with the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. As a fact of special significance, he mentioned the presence “of two Chinese Prelates in this distinguished Assembly, which he likened to the fact that the mustard seed of the Gospel in China brings already plenty of fruit”.¹⁰¹ The Opening Ceremony was followed by a meal at the “always hospitable Jesuits,” in which the Council members could introduce themselves in a brotherly community.

Already here the truly brotherly spirit became manifest, which endured to the end, and turned out to become even stronger along the days of the council, and which will outlast and stay beyond the days of the council: already this fact alone hints at the not meager success of the council.¹⁰²

The work in the Council commenced immediately on May 16th 1924 in five Committees meeting in the next 14 days. The first 3 Committees had to discuss the various drafts, which were then submitted to the fourth Committee, a revision committee, which had the task to prepare and align these drafts in view of a fruitful discussion in the later Plenary Sessions. A fifth Committee discussed other matters not directly related to the work of the Synod/Council. Fr. Weig writes:

The meetings in the Committees lasted for the next 14 days. Daily the members of these committees met two times, in the morning from 9 to 11 AM, and in the afternoon from 4 to 6 PM. The bishops and missionaries assembled themselves for these 5 committees at St. Joseph’s Compound in order to discuss the big challenges of the missionary task in China.¹⁰³

According the Fr. Weig, the purpose of the Council in the words of the Apostolic Delegate Costantini, is the following:

Based on the new Book of Canon Law of the Church [CIC 1917], to debate, what are in theory and in practical experience the most fit means to spread the faith, to improve morals, to end malpractice and to implement a unified discipline (Can. 290). The CIC presents the general law; task of the Coun-

101 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 4. Translated from German by FG.

102 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 4. Translated from German by FG.

103 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 6. Translated from German by FG.

cil is it now to apply this law for the missions and to derive from it a law of missions (*ein Missionsrecht daraus abzuleiten*), which corresponds and aligns to the situation and needs of China, always by keeping the one goal in mind: the conversion of China to Christ. A unification of missionary work (*Vereinheitlichung der Missionierung*) must be now the call of the day/life condition (*Lebensbedingung*). Until now the different missions in China – due to the large distances – are too much separated from each other (*zu sehr voneinander getrennt*), so that the unity of the method and the application of the means for the propagation of faith has been missing. The Council has the task to put together a mission codex, so that through the unified method and by integrating of all means (*Zusammenfassung aller Mittel*), Christianity in China shall receive a new and strong boost (*einen neuen und maechtigen Antrieb erhalten*) in view yielding much more fruits.” (*viel reichlichere Fruechte bringen*).¹⁰⁴

Not all synod members were members of the committees, as too big committees would delay and impede any fruitful work. Those who were not part in the committee had the task of praying for the Synod, or expressed in the words of the presider of the Synode, Constantini, “the non-members like Moses raise their hands [for prayer] while the committees worked.”¹⁰⁵ Weig affirms that to have such a prudent and pious prelate presiding the synod, the “China mission can call itself be blessed/happy” (*sich die chinesische Mission gluecklich schaetzen kann*).

On nine days was adoration in the morning, and when the committee members went to their meetings, the prayer members assembled before the Most Referend Good (*vor dem hochwuerdigsten Gute*), in view of manifesting the most beautiful alignment of the Ora with the Labora.¹⁰⁶

After 14 days, when the Committee meetings finished, the Plenary Meetings could resume, the start of the Council proper (*das eigentliche Konzil*). Everybody was looking forward to these upcoming Plenary Meetings, with both expectations and also some anxieties, because on them in fact everything depended in regard to the overall result of the Council.¹⁰⁷ But soon, everybody saw very clearly, that the right spirit and method prevail within the Plenary Meetings. Fr. Weig writes even, that it was a

104 Apostolic Delegate Celso Costantini, quoted by Georg Weig in: Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 6. Translated from German by FG.

105 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 6. Translated from German by FG.

106 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 6. Translated from German by FG.

107 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 6, no. 4.

joy to join and be present in these meetings, and to follow their deliberations, which offer a much deeper insight into the situation of the mission work in China than many articles or lectures on the missions. But these meetings also manifested that among the Chinese episcopate were men, outstanding not only in virtue, but also in science (*Wissenschaft*).¹⁰⁸

All in all, 15 Plenary Meetings took place, and the council members walked to these meetings in the St. Joseph Church daily by foot, car, tram, or via Riksha. Only 2 bishops, who arrived already somehow sick, had to refrain at some times from attending the plenary meetings.¹⁰⁹

Finally, on June 12th 1924, the solemn closing ceremony could be held, again in the St. Ignatius Church in Zikawei. The Apostolic Delegate praised the patience and hard work, and before everything else, he praised “the spirit of concord (‘Eintracht’) and truly brotherly love, in which the deliberations could be conducted.”¹¹⁰ The Council ended with the greetings of peace and the dedication of China to Mother Mary:

On the upper step of the Altar, a statue of the Most blessed Mother Mary has been placed. Before her, the Apostolic Delegate, the bishops in their ornate and the priests knelt down, in order to pray the first time the Prayer of Dedication of China to Mary. One day after, about half of the synod members led by the Apostolic Delegate made a pilgrimage to Zofe, the already famous Chinese Marian Shrine of Our Lade, in order to renew this Dedication.¹¹¹

The Council concluded with a meal together in good spirit, affirming the overall happy conduct of the Council (*uberaus glucklichen Verlauf des Konzils*).¹¹² Weig does not fail to praise the location of Shanghai as the most fitting site for that council. He also mentioned the Lay Apostle of China, Mr. Joseph Lopahong, the Apostle of this town in lay gowns (*Apostel dieser Stadt im Laiengewand*). “From him, his many friends and helpers, their works and new endeavors, a new thick book could be written, and it will be written one day.”¹¹³

The catholic community of Shanghai was truly grateful that this first

108 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 6, no. 4. Translated from German by FG.

109 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 7, no 4.

110 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” 7, no 4.

111 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” p. 8, no 5.

112 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” p. 8, no. 5.

113 Weig, “Das erste chinesische Plenarkonzil in Shanghai,” p. 9, no. 6. This prophesy has been fulfilled in the publication of Leo Leeb, *Shanghai's Forgotten Apostle of Charity: Joseph Lu Bohong (1875-1937)* (Bochum/Freiburg: Project Verlag, 2022).

Plenary Council of all of China took place in their very city. They showed this in a special way by organizing a festive Celebration Meal on June 1st 1924 in honour of the Council members, in which even highest city officials participated, around 400 people. The festive meal took place in the large St. Joseph's Hospiz of Mr. Joseph Lopahong, a place which truly testifies to the charitable spirit and practice of the Shanghai catholic community.

6. Perspectives and Contributions

by Bishop Augustin Henninghaus SVD

The autobiographer of Bishop Henninghaus, Fr. Hermann Fischer SVD, summarizes the contributions of Fr. Henninghaus in the following words:

Not small have been efforts and assistance (*Mitwirkung*) over many years of Bishop Henninghaus in those preparatory efforts which ultimately led to the realization of the National Council of all missionary bishops and religious superiors in China in the year 1924 as its crowning result.¹¹⁴

According to Fischer, Henninghaus' main contribution lies in his efforts of fostering a closer contact and better cooperation of the catholic religious superiors in China. He was one of the first who realized how burning and relevant this issue is for China in this grave time of transition.¹¹⁵ Already back in 1906, Henninghaus wrote to his General Superior Arnold Janssen in Europe and mentioning the lack of cooperation and contact of the different religious orders in China:

A really bad issue is, that the catholic missions in China have little contact with each other. This would be very important just in a time, when the following big questions emerge: modern questions regarding schools, court matters (*Prozessfragen*), the cult of Confucius in the new schools, the issue of exterritoriality of the missions, all of which one should talk and argue (*aussprechen*) about. All the more we do not even have any organ or instrument for it, whereas the Protestants have many of them. I already have knocked at the door of the Jesuits in view of taking on the initiative, but with no success. We ourselves [SVD] have neither the means nor the people for this.¹¹⁶

114 Hermann Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus: 53 Jahre Missionar und Missionsbischof – Ein Lebensbild*, 2. Auflage (Kaldenkirchen: Steyler Missionsbuchhandlung G.m.b.H., 1946), 222.

115 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 222.

116 Letter Henninghaus to Janssen, 18. February 1906, quoted from: Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*,

But Henninghaus did not give up, and when he was planning a trip to Europe, he remarked to Janssen:

As I have told you earlier, Rome asked to hold a Bishops Conference for the Missions in China, respectively a regional synod. I want to join this synod, evermore, as I have proposed to hold such a meeting. There is not message yet when it should take place.¹¹⁷

This regional synod was scheduled to start on 1st November 1907, but was then postponed to 1st March 1908, and was finally actually buried. “This was very painful for Bishop Henninghaus, but he did not give up on the plan.”¹¹⁸ The following years of social and political turmoil in China, and even globally with the WWI, added only new questions to the much needed agenda of such a bishops meeting in China. But in all of this, Henninghaus realized, that “only a person with a certain authority over all catholic missions in China could overcome all the obstacles and realize the idea or plan of having a Plenary Council of all Bishops of the land.”¹¹⁹

Finally, immediately after World War I, Rome realized the Kairos and appointed in 1919 Monsignor Archbishop Guibriant, General Superior of the MEP, as Apostolic Visitor for all of China. He was the right man, outstanding in knowledge as well as apostolic spirit.

Already in November 1919 he came to South-Shandong and conducted over several days an important meeting with Bishop Henninghaus and several missionaries. At this meeting, the following urgent means have been suggested to the Apostolic Visitor: the mission of an Apostolic Delegate and the Planning of a Plenary National Council for China. Archbishop Guebriant put all his weight into supporting these ideas.¹²⁰

The next step was that all bishops of China received a comprehensive Questionnaire from Rome in regard to the issues that should be deliberated at such a general Council for all of China. Rome asked the bishops to discuss these questions with their priests and to prepare and formulate answers.

Bishop Henninghaus took this task very serious. The Pastoral Conferences usually held during the yearly retreat at Taikia have been used for this. In

222.

117 Letter Henninghaus to Janssen, 13th February 1907, quoted from: Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 222.

118 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 223.

119 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 223.

120 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 223.

daily two meetings with two hours, over a period of 2 weeks, all questions have been deliberated thoroughly.¹²¹

These meetings and the answers found and formulated have been crucial in view of preparing the Plenary Council later, as has been confirmed.

The Questionnaire sent in by Bishop Henninghaus with the answers to the questions asked by the Propaganda has been acknowledged to be one of the best, and it has been reproduced and diligently studied in the preparatory meetings by the theologians of the Council. Such deliberations or conferences have been taken place in: Hong Kong for the South, and in Hankou for the Middle, and in Tientsin for the North of China. Bishop Henninghaus also travelled to Tientsin, and he took along his Provicar Fr. Ziegler, and his Seminary Director Fr. Georg Weig.¹²²

In August 1922 the long expected Apostolic Delegate has been appointed in the person of Archbishop Celso Costantini, who took on the issue of the Plenary Council with great efforts. He called for a conference of theologians of all China to Wuhan in the province Hupeh from end of May to End of June 1923, in order to line out the issues of deliberations for the Plenary Council. Bishop Henninghaus appointed as his delegated theologian his Seminary Director Fr. Georg Weig SVD. “Also here the answers to the Questionnaire sent in by Bishop Henninghaus of the questions asked by the Propaganda played an important role.”¹²³

For the Plenary Council itself in 1924, Bishop Hennighaus took along with him his Regional Fr. Hermann Schoppelrey, and again his Seminary Director Fr. Georg Weig SVD, who was there Lector and later became bishop of Tsingtao. Bishop Henninghaus was the only German Bishop attending the whole Council. His assistant Fr. Georg Weig writes about the position of Henninghaus as the only one German Religious Superior and Bishop:

We could say here also: ‘*Unus sed leo*’ (only one, but a lion). I could accompany the most reverend Father and was as Lector Synod a witness of the great influence he exerted upon the deliberations. He often spoke up, and he found ear due to this great repudiation, which he enjoyed already in all of China, in both the presiding Apostolic Delegate Costantini as well as in the council’s fathers.¹²⁴

121 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 243-244.

122 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 224.

123 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 224.

124 Georg Weig, *Kaomi Regions-Korrespondenz* 1939, Nr. 8, S. 290, quoted from: Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 225.

One Member of the Council judges about Bishop Henninghaus the following:

Bishop Henninghaus worked in one of the five Committees. But more important was his contribution in the Plenary Meetings. Often here the different opinions stood contradictory opposed to each other, and there were fierce debates. Bishop Henninghaus often intervened and turned out to be a master of clear thoughts and was very skilled in harmonizing divergent opinions. He broke down the antagonistic views into concise and clear formulas and paved the way with great objectiveness and calm in view of mutual understanding. It was generally accepted, that through his dexterous (*geschickt*) and reconciling approach (*versöhnliche Art*) he made not a small contribution in view of a good course of this for the church of china so relevant assembly (*bedeutungsvollen Versammlung*) of all bishops of the country.¹²⁵

The high general respect shown to Bishop Henninghaus was also expressed in the fact, that already during the Council he was tasked to work out a Pastoral Letter, which the Papal Legate would send in the name of all Bishops to the clerics and the faithful of the Catholic Church in China. “The text drafted by him for this Circular Letter found the acclamation of all.”¹²⁶

Bishop Henninghaus revealed his own impression and personal experience in the Council in Shanghai in a Letter to his General Superior in Rome:

On the matter of our General Synod in Shanghai I do not want to report anything more. Fr. Georg Weig, who participated as “*lector actorum*,” wrote a nice and longer report already in the *Katholischen Missionen*. It was truly a beautiful and deeply touching (*herzergreifend*) assembly, and, as I hope, blessed with abundance of the Holy Spirit. One could really be edified with the piety, the simplicity, and the earnest, genuine zeal for souls of the present bishops and missionaries. The Apostolic Delegate Costantini conducted the negotiations with great expertise and in a genuine apostolic spirit (*mit grossem Geschick und echt apostolischem Geiste*). The hospitality of the Jesuits was downright admirable (*geradezu bewundernswert*). The splendid catholic institutions and establishments (*die herrlichen katholischen Anstalten*) and the glorious catholic life of the many faithful of Shanghai provided the proper framework for the Synod. At the end we dedicated

125 A (anonymous) member of the Council, quoted from: Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 225.

126 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 225.

In another Letter, Henninghaus wrote:

It is indeed something magnificent with such a Convention (*Tagung*). This wonderful unity of faith, of the will and aspiration (*Streben*), this concord (*Eintracht*), and love, despite the different languages and nationalities, the interesting deliberations, the solemn conventions, and some moments which spoke loudly to the heart; and finally, the great catholic works and the truly catholic life: all this offers impressions, which one never will forget. Apart from the fruits which we can hope to come from this convention, the experience of it as such yields already a rich benefit. Some bishops expressed this openly. I am happy to have gotten to know many of these men in their exemplary piety, modesty, and everything paired with an earnest apostolic zeal and brotherly kindness. The episcopacy of China counts among itself several apostolic figures (*zahlreiche apostolische Gestalten*).¹²⁸

In a letter to the General Superior in 1928, when sending him an Exemplar of the Council Text, he wrote:

You will not find in it something sensational. That you should not expect from such a council. But after all it delivers a fine work and offers the missionary and pastoral work in China a very solid and unified foundation (*eine sehr gediegene einheitliche Grundlage*) and many timely cues (*viele sehr zeitgemasse Fingerzeige*).¹²⁹

Also, after the Council, Bishop Henninghaus was engaged in its aftermath. Upon request of the Apostolic Delegate, he provided one of his priests, Fr. Theodor Mittler SVD, as member of the Commission established by the Council called: *Pro Scholis, Libris et Diariis* (for the Schools, Handbooks, and Matriculation/Registration)(*fuer Schulwesen, Handbuecher, und Matrikel-In*).¹³⁰ Fr. Mittler became the Editor of the newly founded monthly Magazine *Collectanea commissionis synodalis*, which soon assumed significance under his leadership.¹³¹ Bishop Henninghaus himself was appointed to preside over the “Preparatory Commission for Unified Texts for Catechism and Public Prayers.” The Council itself planned 3 Catechism: a small one for children and

127 Letter Henninghaus to the General Superior SVD, quoted from: Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 226.

128 Letter Henninghaus on 3rd August 1924, quoted from Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 226.

129 Letter Henninghaus to the General Superior, 25. December 1928, quoted from: Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 226.

130 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 227.

131 Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 227.

old people, a middle version for primary schools and catechumen preparing for baptism, and a big one for teachers, catechists at Middle and High Schools. The most important one was the middle one, and the work on it started immediately after the Council, together with the small one, and all this has been accomplished under the leadership of Bishop Henninghaus. The biographer Fischer writes on this task in 1946:

It was an extraordinary arduous (*muhsam*) and thorny task to pave the way through quasi countless wishes and suggestions. The bishop worked out a draft together with some priests, and let it be printed in his own printing press and then sent to all Bishops of China, requesting from them their expert opinions and suggestions for improvements. The incoming suggestions have been assessed and whenever possible included. The produced Catechism received the acceptance and approbation of the Apostolic Delegate.¹³²

Henninghaus worked for over seven years on this Middle and Small Catechism, and much of his own funds were used in producing these first 2 versions of the unified Catechisms. After completion, Henninghaus gave it immediately free to be printed for all of China. Because of his advanced age, he could not take on the task of the big Catechism.

A Catalogue of all publications of Divine Word Missionaries, which started to be compiled still by Fr. Roman Malek SVD, will be published in the Monumenta Serica Monograph Series end of 2024 under the title: *Bibliotheca Sinica Christiana: Annotated Catalog of Divine Word Missionaries' (S.V.D.) Publications in Shandong (1882–1950)*. In this publication, also all editions of the Unified Catechism (*Einheitskatechismus*) will be properly listed, which have been tasked by the Plenary Council of Shanghai and have been prepared and published under the leadership of Bischof Henninghaus. The chosen title of this catalogue, *Bibliotheca Sinica Christiana*, goes back to an article by Henninghaus.¹³³

¹³² Fischer, *Augustin Henninghaus*, 227.

¹³³ I am grateful to Dr. Barbara Hoster for this information.

Decrees on Sacred Music at First Shanghai Council (1924): A Historical Review and Its Modern Significance

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Abstract

In 1924, Celso Costantini (1876-1958), Pope Pius XI's Apostolic Delegate to China, convened the first plenary council of the Catholic church in China. The council established and approved decrees governing different aspects of the Catholic faith and life, including regulations related to sacred music (521-529). Principally formulated in accordance with "Tra le sollecitudini," the *motu proprio* issued by Pope Pius X (papacy 1903-1914) in 1903, these decrees on music provided instructions for different aspects of the practices of sacred music in the missionary region of China.

These regulations govern the general principles without dwelling on details. Among them, No. 521 and No. 526 find their source in article 1264 of the revised edition of *Codex Iuris Canonici*, which was begun by Pope Pius X and promulgated by Pope Benedict XV in 1917 and this article is the only one in the Canon Law that mentions sacred music. No. 522 and No. 523 reiterate the significance of the *motu proprio* on sacred music issued by Pope Pius X and repeat part of the contents. Numbers 527-529, which regulate the musical roles of women and non-Catholics in the sacred liturgy, have their historical contexts. They are based upon either related documents of the Holy See or the result of questions and answers between local dioceses, so the contents are no longer pertinent today. The following discussion focuses on the two guidelines that have had more influence on the development of sacred music in China: the instruction and transmission of Gregorian chant (523-524) and the use of Chinese music (525).

Regulations governing sacred music in the Catholic church have never failed to underscore the importance of the teaching of Gregorian chant in seminaries and Catholic schools. Accordingly, decrees released after the First Plenary Council in Shanghai also instructed that liturgical chants should be properly taught and encouraged missionaries working in China to continue the efforts of their predecessors in this regard, so that Gregorian chant could be transmitted and sung more extensively in the missionary regions. From the perspective of the publication of chant books in China, especially in the metropolitan cities, after 1910 an increasing number of chant books were compiled and edited based upon the Solesmes edition with a clear indication that they conformed to the Vatican edition.

Another equally important resolution in the Shanghai Council is No. 525, which officially permitted the use of Chinese music in churches. The pre-conditions were that the music used should not be secular in nature and could be applied at appropriate times and in an appropriate manner. The term “Chinese music (*Musica Sinica*)” designated principally the prayers written in classical Chinese and set to relatively simple music so that the congregation could sing together. In addition to the prayers sung in Chinese, there were also the early Chinese hymns written in the Chinese musical style. Not long before the First Shanghai Council, one of the first Chinese hymnals written by a single composer, Jozef van Oost, CICM, was published in Shanghai. Given the fact that these hymns were not to be used in the sacred liturgy at that time, they can be seen as precursors for the major changes made at the Second Vatican Council, which permitted the use of vernacular language. The decrees promulgated after the First Shanghai Council did not directly regulate the compositions of sacred music, but the limited permission for the use of Chinese music certainly created new possibilities for the ensuing development of Chinese sacred music.

The two traditions of sacred music in China discussed previously culminate in the case of the Chinese chants adapted by Fr. Vincent Lebbe. Fr. Lebbe was the first person to systematically localize the chanting of Gregorian chant in the Catholic liturgy in China. By doing so, Fr. Vincent Lebbe preserved the treasure of Catholic sacred music while at the same time creating for it a new local dimension. His work on Chinese chants has made him a remarkable figure in the development of Chinese Catholic music. It is important to point out: his work on Chinese chants was accomplished not long after the Shanghai Council but not many people have heard about it. It is worthy to be re-discovered today.

From today’s perspective, even though the Second Vatican Council decided that vernacular languages could be used in liturgical settings, and, consequently Gregorian chant no longer enjoys its former primacy as the true voice of the Catholic church and is no longer the first option for liturgical songs in most churches, the repertoire of Gregorian chant should still be properly attended to. Not only the adult Catholic faithful, but also children, should learn to sing some of the important chants. This is one of the things we can learn from the

First Plenary Council in Shanghai. After the Shanghai Council, the integration of Chinese elements into works of sacred music, led to substantial developments, and to a great extent, even presaged the diversity and blossoming of sacred music after the Second Vatican Council. We hope that more Church composers can draw inspiration from these two guidelines to write more songs of high quality so that through sacred music the Catholic church can sing for the “glorification of God and sanctification of the faithful.”

Keyword: First Shanghai Council, Catholic sacred music, inculturation, Gregorian chant

1924上海主教會議聖樂相關法令： 歷史解讀與今日意義

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摘要

1924年駐華宗座代表剛恆毅總主教（Celso Costantini, 1876-1958）在上海召開第一次中國主教會議，會議制定並通過了涉及教會生活各方面的法令，其中也包括了聖樂（sacred music）方面的相關規範（521-529）。這些法令以教宗庇護十世（Pius X, 1903-1914在位）的自動手諭（motu proprio）〈在善牧職務中〉（“Tra le sollecitudini”）為依歸，對於二十世紀二〇年代中國傳教區聖樂實踐的多個面向，提供了指導性的原則，其中對於修會與學校的音樂教育、禮儀歌曲歌本的版本問題、華人音樂的使用、女性在聖堂中詠唱音樂的角色，以及異教人士能否參與禮儀音樂等問題，均有所規範與指示。本文擬重新審視這些聖樂法令條文，討論這些規範的形成背景與來源，並與當時與後來的天主教會聖樂相關歷史文獻與重要聖樂作品相互印證，討論其對傳教區教會生活所造成的影響，同時也思考這些聖樂相關法令內涵在今日所具有的意義。

關鍵字: 1924上海會議, 天主教聖樂, 本地化, 額我略曲

¹ 天主教輔仁大學比較文學博士，現為輔仁大學音樂學系、全人教育課程中心合聘副教授，兼任天主教學術研究院副研究員，專長領域為天主教聖樂、文學與音樂跨藝術研究與教育科技應用。個人研究主題包括天主教聖樂早期在華傳播史、早期天主教中文聖歌歌本相關研究，以及額我略歌曲（Gregorian chant）入華與本地化歷程等，曾在國內外學術研討會與中外文期刊發表多篇論文。

一、導論

由於音樂是教會禮儀中不可或缺的一部分，因此天主教會對於聖樂 (sacred music) 一直相當重視，歷任教宗對於聖樂也多有訓導，特別是在特利騰大公會議 (Council of Trent, 1545-1563) 之後，教會的立法權逐漸由地方主教轉向羅馬，由教宗主導教會各類事務的方向，音樂方面亦是如此。²例如特利騰大公會議中已對於禮儀音樂的諸多問題，特別是對於俗樂與聖樂的區分做出討論。³而教宗本篤十四世 (Benedict XIV, 1740-1758在位) 於1749年頒佈的〈Annus qui〉通諭，即已開始容許音樂創作上的個別性與地域性發展，惟不可遠離禮儀的要求。⁴由此可見，這些聖樂訓導的內容與時俱進，也與天主教會聖樂的實踐與創作的方向息息相關。⁵

在這些與聖樂相關的訓令中，教宗庇護十世 (Pius X, 1903-1914在位) 於1903年11月22日頒佈之論聖樂自動手諭 (motu proprio) 〈在善牧職務中〉 (‘‘Tra le sollecitudini’’) 可說是最具重要性的代表文獻，也是第一份完全以聖樂為主題的教宗文獻。這位熱愛聖樂的教宗對當代聖樂的定義與範圍加以重整，並在這篇詔書中制定各方面的相關規範，呈現出教宗對於在整個教會中導入更具統整性的禮儀音樂的希冀，也確立額我略歌曲 (Gregorian chant) 為天主教會最重要聖樂傳統的地位。⁶是以，這篇自動手諭成為二十世紀最重要的天主教會聖樂指南，也是後續與聖樂相關文獻，例如《禮儀憲章》 (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 1963) 第六章與1967年〈論聖禮中的音樂〉 (Musicam sacram) 的論述基石。

至於〈在善牧職務中〉的中文版，最早則見於成和德司鐸 (P. Odoric Tc’eng, 1873-1928) ⁷於1920年在香港出版的《額詠學要》 (Cantus Gregoriani Methodus)。成和德於1919年《聖教雜誌》第八卷第四期 (頁158-162) 刊登了〈額詠學要序〉，該文已經提及庇護十世的這篇自動手諭。隨後在正式出版的這本額我略歌曲專著中，也將完整的詔書譯文附

2 Anthony Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations* (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2007), 272-273.

3 參見 Edith Weber, *Le concile de Trente (1545-1563) et la musique*, 2nd ed (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 2008), 220-221.

4 劉志明, 《聖樂的真諦》 (香港: 真理學會, 2019), 頁43。

5 整理教會聖樂方面相關訓導的文獻整理可參見 Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music, 95 A.D. to 1977 A.D.*, 1st ed. (The Liturgical Press, 1987); A. Hanin, *La Législation ecclésiastique en matière de musique religieuse* (Paris: Desclée, 1933).

6 Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform*, 273.

7 成和德為方濟會士，擅長音樂。1923年被擢為湖北蒲圻監牧，為1926年獲教宗祝聖的六位國籍主教之一。成和德亦參與了第一屆上海全國主教會議。成和德在上海主教會議中被分在委員會第四組，負責討論「如何在現時代研讀新的《教會法典》」。參見劉國鵬, 《剛恆毅與中國天主教的本地化》 (北京: 社會科學文獻出版社, 2011), 頁151。

於其中⁸，並強調「教宗非僅勸告，實有命令法律意旨」⁹。因此，在第一次中國主教會議於1924年召開之時，這篇具有法令意義的重要聖樂文獻已經有中文的翻譯誕生，也讓傳教區的神職人員與信友有所依循。

就禮儀聖樂的相關規範而言，在中國傳教區一直未有正式的全國性指導方針，只有地區性主教會議的一些決議，以及各修會的傳教指導文件中的相關內容¹⁰，這種情形到了1924年終於有了改變。1924年駐華宗座代表剛恆毅總主教（Celso Costantini, 1876-1958）在上海召開第一次中國主教會議，會議制定並通過了涉及教會生活各方面的法令，其中也包括了聖樂方面的相關規範。這些法令以前述教宗庇護十世的論聖樂自動手諭為依歸，對於中國傳教區聖樂實踐的多個面向，提供了指導性的原則。本文重新審視這些聖樂法令條文，討論其中具有代表性之規範的形成背景與來源，並與當時與後來的天主教會聖樂相關歷史文獻與重要聖樂作品相互印證，討論其對傳教區教會生活所造成的影響，同時也思考這些聖樂相關法令內涵在今日所具有的意義。

二、第一屆中國主教會議聖樂相關法規概覽

在由土山灣出版的第一屆中國主教會議之法令與規章彙編中，關於聖樂的相關規定被列在第三卷（Liber III）「教會教產與宗教物品」（De rebus）的第三編（Pars III）中的第17題（Titulus XVII），標題為「論聖樂與額我略歌曲」（De musica sacra et cantu gregoriano）。¹¹以下表一整理出這些聖樂相關法規的主要內容與相關原始文獻出處。

表一 第一屆中國主教會議聖樂相關法規一覽表

編號	內容重點	參考出處
521	聖樂不應混雜世俗或不純淨的元素；關於聖樂的法令應受遵守。	Can. 1264. - § 1
522	應遵守教宗庇護十世的論聖樂自動手諭中的規定。	

8 成和德，《額詠學要》（Hong Kong: St. Lewis' Industrial School, 1920），頁11-19。

9 成和德，《額詠學要》，頁10。

10 在此僅舉數例：*Synthesis Decretalium Sinarum 1784-1910*, edited by J. M. Caubrière, (Hong Kong: Typis Nazareth, 1914; *Monita Nankinensia*, new ed (Tou-Sè-Wè: Zi-Ka-Wei, 1933); Arcidiocesi Anking, *Directorium Missionale Archidiocesis de Anking* (Anking: Missio catholica, 1947).

11 *Primum Concilium Sinense*. Anno 1924: Acta, Decreta et Normae, Vota, Etc (Tou-Sè-Wè: Zi-Ka-Wei, 1930), 219-221.

523	教會學校應教導孩子們詠唱禮儀歌曲。	
524	應使用教會認可的額我略歌曲書籍（梵蒂岡版）。	April 25, 1904, Pius X, Col nostro ¹²
525	中國音樂可以在聖堂中使用，但不是世俗音樂，在合適的時間以合宜的方式使用；一般來說，在傳教區的教會中要排除以傳教士母語詠唱的歌曲。	<i>Cf. Synthesis Decretalium Sinarum 1784-1910</i> , 134. Can. 621.
526	關於修會修女在自己聖堂或公共場合詠唱聖歌的相關規定。	Can. 1264. —§ 2
527	一般婦女與女孩在聖堂中詠唱聖歌的相關規定（不應單獨在聖堂中詠唱；在聖堂中與男性分開位置…）。	S. C. R. Decr., n. 4210, 17 Jan. 1908 ¹³ ; Decr. N. 4231, 18 Dec. 1908. ¹⁴
528	非教友不應在天主教堂內詠唱；應正確教導教內孩童詠唱禮儀歌曲。	S. C. S. O., 7 Jul. 1864; Coll. I., an. 1257, ad 2. S.C.S.O., 1 Maii 1889; Coll. 2, n. 1703.
529	教友不能在非天主教的聖堂彈奏管風琴；如有必要，可暫時允許異教人士在天主教會聖堂中司琴。	S. C. de P. F., 8 Iul. 1889; Coll. 2, n. 1713; S. C. S. O., 23 Feb. 1820; Coll. 1., n. 739, ad 3.

從以上的整理我們可以看到，這些規定基本上是大方向的原則指引，而較少實踐上的細節討論。其中521條與526出自1917年經教宗本篤十五世（Benedict XV, 1914-1922在位）頒佈的新版《天主教法典》（Canon Law）1264條（這一條也是此版《天主教法典》中唯一提及聖樂之處），第522與523條則是重申教宗庇護十世的論聖樂自動手諭的重要性與強調其中部分內容。而至於527-529條關於婦女與異教徒在教堂中與禮儀音樂相關的角色處理的是歷史性的議題，也都有聖座的相關文件或對於教區提問之答覆做為依據，且在今日已經較不具有相關性，本文不擬深入討論。

12 本自動詔書全文英譯可參見 Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music*, 256.

13 全文英譯可參見 Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music*, 466.

14 全文英譯可參見 Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music*, 467.

接下來我們將著重在這些法規中與中文聖樂發展較具重要影響的兩個重點，做進一步的分析與討論：（一）關於額我略歌曲的教導與傳播（523-524條）；（二）關於「中國音樂」的使用（525條）。

三、關於額我略歌曲的教導與傳播

在梵二大公會議之前，拉丁文是教會禮儀使用的官方語言，因此額我略歌曲則是在這些禮儀中使用的「本有」歌曲，具有特殊的地位。而在官方的禮儀書籍中，對於需要詠唱的禮儀歌曲也都有所規範，在世界各地均應加以遵守。在教宗庇護十世的論聖樂自動手諭中，開宗明義便對於額我略歌曲有如下的說明（在此我們引用《額詠學要》之譯文）：

聖樂資格，求之於額我略詠 *Cantus gregorianus*，可得其最高度量。羅瑪教會，是以規為尚。乃其承繼於古聖師輩之所得。而歷世於其儀禮律本，謹為之保存。而示與信眾，如本己之物。令於特定之儀禮中，專壹用之者。且賴新近研究之功，其厥初的純粹，幸全然得恢復之矣。（3）¹⁵

因此教宗的自動手諭首先認可了額我略歌曲在聖樂中的首要地位，而此一音樂亦是教會的重要傳統。除此之外，教會也對於額詠的教導與學習多有強調，特別是建議在神學院中成立歌唱學校（*schola cantorum*）（25）。在第一屆全國主教會議法令中的523條與524條主要談到兩項與額我略歌曲相關的規定：在學校教導額我略歌曲，以及發行符合梵蒂岡版（Vatican edition）的歌本。

（一）教導額我略歌曲

對於傳教士來說，引入額我略歌曲應該是在傳教區實踐天主教禮儀時的重要工作之一。然而，在十九世紀之前的中國傳教史文獻中，儘管經常提及詠唱大禮彌撒（[法] *grand'mass*；[英] *high mass*），但卻很少發現有關教導額我略歌曲的記載。很有可能是傳教士所能運用的資源不足，因此無法真正在傳教區推廣教會的拉丁文禮儀歌曲。這樣的情況到了十九世紀之後開始有所改變，傳教士在當時有了較多的資源，傳教史文獻中也出現了更多詠唱額我略歌曲、甚至是教導信友與孩童學習額我略歌曲的記載。例如余樂詩（David Francis Urrows）便透過對於傳教士信件的解讀，而對於十九世紀中葉上海一帶的耶穌會士在聖樂實踐方面所做的努力，有過深入的論述。¹⁶

¹⁵ 成和德，《額詠學要》，頁13。

¹⁶ 參見 David Francis Urrows, *François Ravary SJ and a Sino-European Musical Culture in Nine-*

到了二十世紀，也能找到類似的例子。例如聖母聖心會（Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae, CICM）¹⁷的馮學淵神父（Eugeen Van Haverre, CICM, 1869-1909）¹⁸在信件述說他在內蒙古當音樂老師、教導中國孩童詠唱聖體降福（Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament）的經驗。馮學淵神父的教唱分為兩個階段，首先是朗讀歌詞，然後是學唱曲調。他會將每個拉丁文字的每個音節配上一個發音最接近的中文字，但這個字也只是發音接近而已，意義上完全和原本的拉丁文字沒有關聯。至於音樂的部分，也是慢慢地由他先示範詠唱，再讓孩童們跟著學唱。根據他的自述，他每日用盡力氣訓練他們，才逐漸地讓他們從不和諧的吼叫聲成為和諧的聲音，而且終於能夠唱出一些歌曲了。於是他們每晚詠唱聖體降福，而教友們也都全心參與。¹⁹

而同會的方裕如神父（Henri de Hondt, CICM, 1875-1951，時為老虎溝副本堂）²⁰在內蒙古傳教時，也曾致力於教導兒童詠唱拉丁文禮儀歌曲。他注意到一個特別的現象，那就是女童的聲音比起男童們來得更好。他解釋，這是因為女童沒有上學，不像男童在中國傳統的教育方式中，必須在課堂中扯著嗓子誦念課文，以致於嗓子都喊啞喊壞了。他也提到在老虎溝育嬰堂的女童把記歌詞當成遊戲一般，只花了十五天就練完了一套完整的彌撒曲常用部分，包含〈垂憐曲〉（Kyrie）、〈光榮頌〉（Gloria）、〈信經〉（Credo）、〈歡呼歌〉（Sanctus）與〈羔羊頌〉（Agnus）。而在他看來，這些女童的詠唱水準，甚至超越了比利時的許多堂區。儘管他們的拉丁文並非最標準，但根據方神父的看法，這些中國孩童詠唱時的虔誠之心，比起歐洲教友有過之而無不及。²¹

我們也看到在天主教會聖樂相關訓令中，均強調在神學院與教會學校中教導額我略歌曲的重要性，上海主教會議的法令特別著重在對於學校應教導兒童詠唱禮儀歌曲的規定，也延續並鼓勵入華傳教士在這方面的努力，以便能讓額我略歌曲傳播到傳教區中更廣更遠的土地之上。

teenth-Century Shanghai (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021).

17 聖母聖心會因以比利時司各特（Scheut）為總部，因此文獻中常稱為 Scheut Missions。

18 1892年來華，當時為程奎海子本堂神父。參見Dirk Van Overmeire編，《在華聖母聖心會士名錄1865-1855》（台北：見證月刊雜誌社，2008），頁557。

19 “Lettre du P. Van Haverre, Un maître de musique. Quelle affaire, voisin!” *Mission de Scheut* (1906): 207-211.

20 參見Overmeire編，《在華聖母聖心會士名錄1865-1855》，頁113。

21 “Lettre du P. Henri de Hondt, Lao-hou-kou, Vallée des Tigres, 27 avril 1905,” *Missions en Chine et au Congo* (1905): 206-210. 對於入華傳教士教導兒童詠唱拉丁文歌曲的更多相關討論，可參見Li-Xing Hong, “‘Singing is Believing’: Songs Taught by Missionaries to Children in China,” *I.A.H. Bulletin* No. 48 (2021): 95-109.

（二）額我略歌曲出版品的演進

對於天主教會禮儀歌曲的統整，自特利騰大公會議之後便已開始有這樣的希冀。而教宗庇護九世（Pius IX, 1846-1878在位）與良十三世（Leon XIII, 1878-1903在位）則是批准使用雷根斯堡（Ratisbon）版的素歌歌本為官方版本。²²在前文引述之教宗庇護十世的論聖樂自動手諭中，也已經提及了素歌的復興與修復，這些都反映出教會當局朝向此一目標的努力。而在1904年4月25日的另一個自動手諭中，教宗則指示應出版梵蒂岡版本的歌本，而這些歌本是建立在索來姆隱修院（Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes）對於中世紀手抄本的研究之上。第一本梵蒂岡版的《垂憐曲集》（*Kyriale*）出版於1905年，隨後並陸續出版了其他的歌本。²³法令第524條則規定在傳教區使用的歌本應符合梵蒂岡版，符合教會當局對於統整禮儀歌曲的一貫思考脈絡。

反觀在中國傳教區的情況，中國也是從十九世紀中葉開始有在本地印製的拉丁文禮儀歌曲歌本，早期的歌本也的確如同第524條中所說的，與梵蒂岡版「有所出入」。早期出版的歌本反映出當時傳教士對於額我略歌曲的理解與教學嘗試，而遣使會和耶穌會可說是最早朝此一方向推動的修會。例如遣使會在北京出版的《聖事歌經簡要》（1861）與*E Graduali et Antiphonario Romano excerpta*（1897）均是以法國勒科弗爾（Lecoffre）出版社的素歌出版品為依歸，再加入部分本地化的元素而成的本地歌本。但自1910年出版的《宗古歌經簡要》與《聖體降福經文》開始，以及後續的《大瞻禮彌撒》（1925）等歌本，則均編輯自索萊姆隱修院的版本，且均清楚標示符合梵蒂岡版。²⁴

又如耶穌會於上海土山灣出版、由蘇念澄（Hippolyte Basuiau, 1824-1886）編輯的拉丁文歌本《詠唱經文》（*Chants sacrés à l'usage des missions*, 1878初版），根據的則是由耶穌會士音樂家藍庇洛特（Louis Lambillotte, 1797-1855）的素歌理論轉譯為五線譜的素歌版本。在1927年由翟光朝（Candido Vanara, 1879-1927）與舒德惠（Achille Durand, 1871-1941）兩位神父編輯的第二版中，歌本封面亦強調書中所收錄的歌曲「符合梵蒂岡版」的額我略旋律。最常見的第三版（1934）在收錄歌曲方面做了一些變動，也加入了較簡單的一些拉丁文經文歌，但依然強調「其中的經文完全符合梵蒂岡版」（p. V）。

我們可以說，從這兩個中國首善之區的拉丁文禮儀歌曲的出版品為

22 Hanin, *La Législation ecclésiastique en matière de musique religieuse*, 10.

23 Hanin, *La Législation ecclésiastique en matière de musique religieuse*, 8.

24 關於這些歌本的進一步討論，可參見洪力行，《詠唱的祈禱——從歌本出版初探天主教聖樂在中國的早期發展》（新北市：輔仁大學出版社，2020），特別是第一章。

例，可看到傳教區在落實教會當局指示所做的努力，而上海全國主教會議的決議也更加強化了此一方向的官方推動力。

四、使用中國音樂的問題

第一次中國主教會議關於聖樂的另一個重要的決議是第525條：這條法令正式容許了中國音樂在禮儀中的使用，前提為此一音樂並非俗樂，並在適當的時刻以合宜的方式呈現。這個論點在傳教區並不是第一次提出，因為先前在1891年的一次地區性主教會議中，已有幾乎相同的決議。²⁵

此處的中國音樂，在中國天主教禮儀音樂發展的背景下，最主要指涉的應是文言文祈禱文的詠唱。入華傳教士在十六、十七世紀便已經將天主教會重要的祈禱文譯為中文，而至少從十七世紀開始，便產生了使用簡單的中國式旋律詠唱這些祈禱文的教會傳統。這種做法受到不少傳教士的讚揚，認為這反映出中國教友的虔敬之心。詠唱祈禱文除了做為在堂區主日無法舉行彌撒時的替代品之外，也是不懂拉丁文的一般教友參與彌撒聖祭的方式。教友在舉行彌撒的同時，在不同的時間點詠唱相關的禱文。²⁶第一次主教會議的這條法令，首要的意義在於允許了這類出自傳教區傳統的本地音樂的使用。

不過，從中文聖樂發展的歷史脈絡觀之，此一法令中所說的中國音樂可能隱含了兩個層面：一個是歌詞使用中文，另一個則是旋律使用了中國風格。除了詠唱文言文祈禱文之外，以中國風格音樂創作的中文聖歌也可納入在聖堂使用的中國式音樂之中。舉例來說，在傳教史中有一些早期的中文聖歌的例子，儘管我們已不知這些歌曲是由誰編成或創作。其中在中國流傳已久的〈聖母禱文〉、〈耶穌聖誕歌〉【圖一】、〈聖母痛苦詞〉等聖歌，均使用了中國風格的旋律。但整體而言，在當時天主教中文聖歌的產生仍是以將西方音樂填上中文歌詞為最常見的做法。

25 參見 *Synthesis Decretalium Sinarum 1784-1910*, 134。「621. — Musica sinica in Ecclesiâ admitti potest, dummodo non sit profana et tempore ac more debito perficiatur.」。

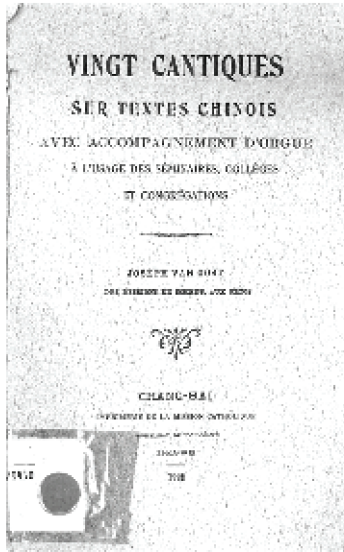
26 可參見洪力行，〈詠唱的祈禱〉一書第二章的相關討論。



圖一 〈耶穌聖誕歌〉詩節一，出自《聖歌寶集》（1911），
頁7（中國國家圖書館藏本）

除了這些早期的中文聖歌之外，在二十世紀也開始有一些新的中文聖樂創作產生。例如由聖母聖心會士彭嵩壽神父（Joseph van Oost, 1877-1939）1922年於徐家匯土山灣印書館出版了 *Vingt cantiques sur textes chinois, avec accompagnement d'orgue, à l'usage des séminaires, collèges et congrégations*（二十首中文聖歌，含管風琴伴奏，用於修院、學校與團體）歌集，其中收錄了二十首由彭神父創作的中文聖歌。這些歌曲的特殊之處在於使用現有的中文聖歌歌詞（部分歌曲標示為使用上海版《各式聖歌》（1877）中的歌詞），為之重新譜寫旋律。這應該是我們所知，最早由單一作曲家所作創作的一組中文聖歌，而非使用現成的西方旋律，填入歌詞。而彭神父為這些歌曲均編寫了管風琴伴奏譜，且每首歌曲都有前奏，這在早期的中國聖歌相關出版品中也很少見。

彭嵩壽神父基本上使用了西方的和聲手法來為這些已存的中文歌詞創作新旋律。而在這些歌曲中，〈耶穌聖心歌二則〉（no. 5）、〈聖母痛苦歌〉（no. 16）與〈聖若瑟中國大主保〉（no. 19）等三首使用了蒙古風格的旋律。以〈聖母痛苦歌〉為例【圖二】，這首歌曲使用了從 g 音開始的五聲音階，具有小調的風格，音域跨度不大，旋律相當質樸，帶有憂鬱的氣質，正適合這首歌曲的歌詞中呈現的哀傷之情，可說是一首優秀的本地語言聖歌創作，只可惜鮮為人知。而這幾首以蒙古音樂風格譜寫的聖歌，也使彭嵩壽神父成為將地方音樂傳統融入本地聖樂創作的先驅之一。



圖二 *Vingt cantiques sur textes chinois* 封面頁
與第16首〈聖母痛苦歌〉（比利時魯汶大學藏本）

除此之外，早期使用中國音樂風格創作中文聖樂最知名的作曲家當屬江文也。他出生於台灣、深造且成名於日本、後來在則中國執教與發展。1946年他認識了方濟會士雷永明神父（Gabriele Maria Allegra, OFM, 1907-1976），在雷神父的建議之下，開始為中譯的聖詠及其他祈禱文創作樂曲。儘管他未受洗成為天主教徒，但他參與天主教的禮儀，聆聽拉丁文額我略歌曲，並從中國音樂的古曲汲取旋律與靈感，寫成了多首脫胎自中國雅樂、深具宗教情懷的天主教歌曲。江文也於1947年出版了《聖詠作曲集》（*Melodiae palmorum*）第一卷、接著於1948年出版《第一彌撒曲》（*Prima Missa*）、《兒童聖詠歌集》與《聖詠作曲集》第二卷等，整體曲目包括了47首聖詠、一套彌撒常用部分、五首 *Alleluia*，以及七首聖母歌曲。²⁷這些中文創作接續了前述的早期嘗試，可說以更系統性的方式，為中文聖樂的發展開啟了新的方向。

儘管這些中文歌曲在當時仍不適合在正式禮儀中使用，但已經為梵二大公會議後開放本地語言之禮儀預做準備。因此儘管第一屆上海主教會議的法令並非直接規範聖樂的創作，但是對於中國音樂的容許使用，已經讓後續的中文聖樂創作產生更多的可能性。

27 蔡詩亞，〈江文也及其宗教音樂作品的介紹〉，《神學年刊》16（1995）：93-118。

五、集二者之大成：雷鳴遠神父的中文額我略曲

在上海舉行的第一次中國主教會議的一個重要意義，在於將建立本地教會確立為傳教目標。²⁸在此之後，經由孫德楨主教的邀請與推動，比利時籍的雷鳴遠神父（Vincent Lebbe, 1877-1940）在河北創立了兩個本地修會，分別是耀漢小兄弟會（1928）與德來小妹妹會（1929）。他希望讓中國籍的修士與修女能用自己的母語詠唱天主教會的禮儀，主要是彌撒與日課。因此，為了這兩個修會的禮儀需求，他將已經由耶穌會士利類思（Lodovico Buglio, SJ, 1606-1682）在十七世紀翻譯為文言文的日課經文配上額我略曲的旋律，讓本地修士修女詠唱。除了日課之外，雷神父也將數套彌撒曲（含常用部分與專用部分）與聖體降福（Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament）所使用的歌曲改編為中文，可以說將當時在中國最重要的天主教會禮儀活動所使用的歌曲都包含在內。這在梵二大公會議之前，教會尚未開放於禮儀中使用中文，可說是極為前進的做法。雷神父非常喜歡額我略歌曲，也在遣使會接受了相關的訓練，更自己閱讀研究書籍，精進對於這項教會重要音樂傳統的理解。²⁹此外，雷神父也熱愛中國語言，因此將這兩個他所熱愛的事物結合，也就成為順理成章之事。

雷鳴遠神父在進行這項改編天主教日課的大工程時，顯然經過相當積密的思考。首先他對於日課的結構與內容有深入的瞭解，也對於教會禮儀年度中不同節日的重要性有所認知，因此能夠逐漸將重要的日課逐步完成本地化，讓兩個修會能夠以中文詠唱禮儀年度中大部分日課的內容。而在音樂的取材方面，額我略歌曲當然是他最主要的旋律來源，但他也不忘從中國音樂的傳統汲取養份。例如有數首日課的讚美詩均有「華調」，也就是中國式的旋律，並安排在大節日時詠唱。例如以下這首《聖母小日課》中的讚美詩（hymn）〈萬福海星（四）〉（Ave maris stella）³⁰【圖三】便是如此：



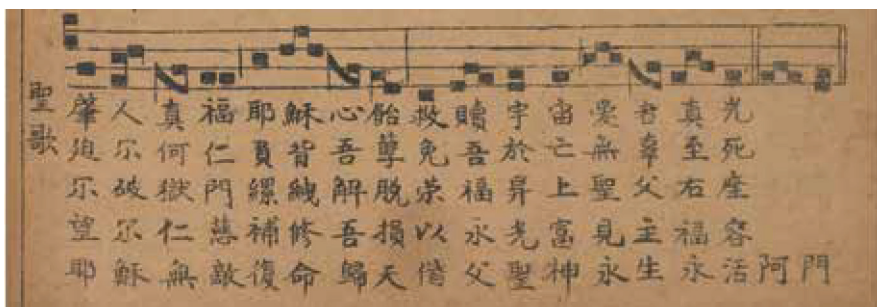
圖三 雷鳴遠神父編〈萬福海星（四）〉（第一節）

28 劉國鵬，《剛恆毅與中國天主教的本地化》，頁162。

29 參見 Ka Chai Ng, “The Indigenization of Gregorian Chant in Early Twentieth-Century China – The Case of Vincent Lebbe and His Religious Congregation,” (Master’s Thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2007), 59-60.

30 耀漢小兄弟會編，《聖母小日課歌詠》（台中：光啟出版社，1959），頁10。

而在使用額我略旋律的歌曲中，雷神父對於原旋律的使用方式並非完全一音不改，而是根據比例原則將原旋律加以濃縮裁減，但仍保有原本額我略歌曲的韻味。³¹以日課中的讚美詩為例，由於利類思神父均是以四字一句的方式來翻譯原本每句依格律而有不同音節數的拉丁文讚美詩，因此雷神父勢必得對原本的旋律做出調整，以適合精簡凝鍊的中文四字詩句。雷神父濃縮裁剪後的旋律，一方面保存了額我略曲的骨架，另一方面又呈現出能配合中文四字詩句的古樸風格。例如〈肇人真福〉（*Salutis humanae Sator*）³²這首來自「耶穌升天大日課」的讚美詩，便是很好的例子【圖四】。



圖四 雷鳴遠神父編〈肇人真福〉，出自《大日課》
「耶穌升天大日課」，頁327（輔仁大學藏本）

部分雷神父創作的新旋律中，也嘗試融入中國音樂風格，一方面突顯額我略歌曲的普世性，另一方面又增添了本地化的元素，成為揉和了兩種風格的傑作。例如聖誕期的應經〈今日天主不棄〉（*Hodie nobis caelorum est*）【圖五】便在應答句（respond）的部分（從一開始「今日天主不棄」至「已丕顯」，圖例前兩行）使用了五聲音階，巧妙地結合了額我略旋律與中國式風格。



31 參見 Ng, "The Indigenization of Gregorian Chant in Early Twentieth-Century China – The Case of Vincent Lebbe and His Religious Congregation," 112-113.

32 原曲可參見 Benedictines of Solesmes, ed, *The Liber Usualis, with Introduction and Rubrics in English* (Tournai, Belgium & New York: Desclée, 1962), 852.



圖五 雷鳴遠神父編〈今日天主不棄〉，出自《大日課》
「聖誕大日課」，頁134-135（輔仁大學藏本）

藉此，雷鳴遠神父一方面保留了天主教會重要的傳統聖樂寶藏，同時也為這個寶藏增添了新的本地化向度，使他所改編的這些中文額我略曲成為中文天主教聖樂發展中獨具一格的里程碑。這個在第一次中國主教會議之後不久產生的中文聖樂成果，值得我們在今日重新發現。³³

六、結語

第一屆中國主教會議所頒佈的這些聖樂相關法條，可以說初步建立了傳教區聖樂方面的相關法令與指導原則，引導中國信友連同整個聖教會一起讚頌天主。雖然很可惜地，其中對聖樂的相關議題多為點到為止，也缺乏對（管）風琴或其他樂器在禮儀中使用等較細節性的討論，不過這些缺憾都可以從教宗庇護十世的論聖樂自動手諭中獲得補充。而這些法令所強調的兩大重點，不論是額我略歌曲的教導與傳播，或是本地語言歌曲的使用，也都在後續的宗座聖樂文獻中再次獲得強調。

從今日的觀點來看，儘管在梵二大公會議開放禮儀使用本地語言之後，額我略歌曲已經不再是多數人使用的禮儀歌曲，但仍然應該加以重視，也應讓信友與兒童能夠學習詠唱其中的重要曲目，這是我們應該自第一屆中國主教會議學習與保留下來的重要觀念。至於將中國音樂融入聖樂創作，自本次主教會議之後，也開始產生了新的發展與長足的進步，更預示了梵二大公會議後聖樂創作的諸多可能性。也期待有更多的教會作曲家在能從這兩點汲取養份，為中文聖樂帶來更多佳作，也讓天主教會的禮儀透過不可或缺的聖樂，能夠達到「光榮天主、聖化信友」的目的。

33 雷鳴遠神父歌曲的重新整理與錄音可參見「雷鳴遠神父中文聖樂遺產」YouTube頻道，<https://www.youtube.com/@vincentlebbechants>。

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Biblia Sinensis? The Vision of a Chinese Translation of Scripture in the *Primum Concilium Sinense* (1924)

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Abstract

Despite the first appearance of Christian missionaries in China in the 7th century, and that of Catholic missionaries in the 12th century, the first complete Catholic Chinese translation of the Bible was produced only in the first half of the 20th century. The publication of the *Studium Fanciscanum* version (aka *Sigao* version) took place after the *Primum Concilium Sinense*. Was the SF version a direct fruit of the *Concilium*? If not, what was the nature of the relation between the two? To answer these questions, this paper first offers a brief overview of the history of Bible translation. Then, it presents and catalogues the principles of Bible translations as stipulated in the Acta of the *Concilium*. Finally, by evaluating a few examples from the SF version with the principles, it is demonstrated that, while the SF version partially fulfills the biblical vision of the *Concilium*, the ideal Bible translation that the Concilium wished available to all Chinese Catholics is yet to come.

Keyword: Bible Translation, *Studium Fanciscanum* version, 思高

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Introduction

Access to the Bible has been one of the most important spiritual nourishments for all Christians. Although Christianity entered Chinese soil in the 7th century, a selection of biblical texts had been translated into the Chinese languages only since the 17th century, roughly one millennium later. Nevertheless, the Catholic translation of the entire Bible into Chinese, the Studium Franciscanum version (hereafter the SF version), or the *Sigao* version as it is commonly called, was not completed until the 20th century.

The beginning of the translation project started in the early 1930s, a few years after the *Primum Concilium Sinense* (hereafter the Concilium). What this paper intends to clarify is simple: first, whether the SF version can be considered, at least partly, the fruit of the Concilium, and second, how far has the SF version has achieved the vision of the biblical translation of the Concilium.

In order to so, this paper proceeds as follows: first, we shall very briefly review the history of biblical translation; second, by reading a selection of articles from the Concilium closely, I shall try to sketch the spirit of the Concilium, and translate it into a few principles that are applicable to biblical translation; and finally, with a few examples, I shall evaluate the SF version against the principles proposed and see whether the biblical vision of a *Biblia Sinensis* as set out the *Primum Concilium Sinense* has already been achieved by it.

1. A Very Brief History of Bible Translation

The need of the (Hebrew) Bible to be rendered into a different language was felt for the first time in its history when it was read in a foreign land by the people who could no longer speak Hebrew, the language in which it had been written. Greek speaking Jews living in Alexandria completed their biblical translation project, rendering the Hebrew Bible, what we call the Old Testament, into Greek, in 2nd cent. BC.² From then on, whenever the Bible enters a new cultural linguistic world, it would see itself be rendered anew in a language intelligible in that historical context, or understandable by the people living in a particular place at a particular time, speaking a particular language.

The version of the Bible, at this point only the Old Testament, that Jesus of

² Here I follow: Adam Kamesar, "The Bible Comes to the West: The Text and Interpretation of the Bible in Its Greek and Latin Forms," in: *Living Traditions of the Bible: Scripture in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Practice*, ed. James E. Bowley (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999), 35–63.

Nazareth and His immediate followers most used would have been that Greek translation, also known as the Septuagint. It is so-called for the legend that the translation was produced by seventy-two Jewish scholars of the Scriptures separately, each in his own cave, but their translations came out identical. Nevertheless, as time passed, and as Christianity gradually spread to the Latin-speaking West, there was the need for the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, the former available in Greek and the latter written in Greek, to be rendered intelligible to the Latin-speaking people of the Roman Empire. In other words, there was the need to translate the Bible into Latin.

As this need was ad hoc and occasional, there was not a centralized effort to coordinate the production of such a translation. As St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo attests:

Those who translated the scriptures from Hebrew into Greek can be counted; this is certainly not true of Latin translators. The fact is that whenever in the early days of the faith a Greek codex came into anybody's hands, and he felt that he had the slightest familiarity with each language, he rushed in with a translation. (*Teaching Christianity*, II.11.16)³

These Latin versions are known as *Vetus Latina*, “Old Latin”.

The presence of variations and mistakes in these Latin versions led St. Jerome to devote himself to the standardization of them, and eventually producing his own Latin version, the so-called *Latina Vulgata*. As Latin became the dominant language of Western Christianity, the Vulgata became the version of the Bible in Catholicism, albeit this norm was only an unwritten one.

Attempts to translate the Bible into vernacular languages were documented during the Middle Ages. Ban on these attempts did exist at the time, albeit mostly locally. For instance, Spain in the 13th century Spain, as one of the decisions made the Council of Toulouse (1229) illustrates:

We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old and New Testaments; unless anyone from the motives of devotion should wish to have the Psalter or the Breviary for divine offices or the hours of the blessed Virgin; but we most strictly forbid their having any translation of these books. (Canon 14)⁴

3 Saint Augustine, *Teaching Christianity* (De Doctrina Christiana), trans. Edmund Hill, OP, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century I/11 (New York: New City Press), 141–142.

Latin original: *Qui enim Scripturas ex hebraea in graecam verterunt, numerari possunt, latini autem interpretes nullo modo. Ut enim cuique primis fidei temporibus in manus venit codex graecus et aliquantulum facultatis sibi utriusque linguae habere videbatur, ausus est interpretari.* (PL 34)

4 Edward Peters, ed., *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe: Documents in Translation* (Philadel-

Nevertheless, one must stress that the ban remained unequivocal, up until the eve of the Council of Trent (1545–1563).⁵ In fact, even Trent did not pass a final verdict on the issue of reading and even producing biblical translations in the vernacular, as Wim François observes:

In Trent, the Council fathers, being engaged in long and often hot-tempered debates in which the proponents and adversaries of vernacular Bible reading held each other in an equilibrium, decided not to take any definitive decision in 1546, and continued to leave it in the hands of the local (both civil and ecclesiastical) authorities.⁶

Nevertheless, the Council of Trent did make some decisions that concern a particular Bible translation, the *Latina Vulgata*. In the Fourth Session of Trent (1546), the Council Fathers declared that:

If anyone should not accept as sacred and canonical these entire books and all their parts as they have, by established custom, been read in the Catholic Church, and as contained in the old Latin Vulgate edition, and in conscious judgment should reject the aforesaid traditions: let him be anathema.⁷

The Council of Trent not only declared a translated version of the Bible, not the Bible in its original languages,⁸ “sacred and canonical”, it also imposed a prohibition on printers that they could only print the version of the Bible with the permission of ecclesiastical superiors.⁹ The limitations and need for further perfection of the Latin Vulgate were also recognized by Trent, albeit not explicitly, certainly witnessed in the *Acta*,¹⁰ that it demanded “this ancient Vulgate edition shall be printed after a thorough revision.”¹¹

Half a century later, two revisions of the Vulgate were completed, and this

phia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 195.

5 See: Wim François, “Vernacular Bible Reading in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: The “Catholic” Position Revisited,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 104 (2018): 23–56, esp. 53.

6 François, “Vernacular Bible Reading in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” 54.

7 Norman P. Tanner, SJ, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume Two: Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), 664.

Latin Original: *Si quis autem libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus prout in Ecclesia Catholica legi consueverunt et in veteri vulgata latina editione habentur pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit et traditiones praedictas sciens et prudens contempserit: anathema sit.*

8 However, it should be noted that the Council Trent did not reject the authority of the original texts either. See: James M. Vosté, “The Vulgate at the Council of Trent,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 9 (1947): 9–25, esp. 20–21.

9 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, II:664.

10 Vosté, “The Vulgate at the Council of Trent,” 16, 19.

11 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, II:665. Cf. the Latin original: “*decernit et statuit ut posthac Sacra Scriptura potissimum vero haec ipsa vetus et vulgata editio quam emendatissime imprimatur.*”

version of the Vulgate was known as the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate, named after the two popes, Sixtus V and Clement VIII, who promulgated them, in 1590 and 1592 respectively. Hence, even without an absolute ban on the Bible in the vernacular, the *Latina Vulgata* became *the* Bible for Catholics.

This was the position of the Church for centuries to come. In Pope Leo XIII's 1893 encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*, On the Study of Holy Scripture, the Latin translation remained the version of the Bible to go to for its study (no. 8). The original texts are to be scrutinized only when there is ambiguity or lack of clearness in the Vulgate (no. 13). This position continued until early 20th century, as witnessed in Pope Benedict XV's 1920 encyclical, *Spiritus Paraclitus*, on the fifteenth centenary of St. Jerome (no. 32).

However, 13 years before the promulgation of *Spiritus Paraclitus*, Pope Pius X, realizing the necessity for the revision of the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate, appointed a Commission for this project in 1907. After centuries of using and studying it, the discovery of the presence of many textual problems was certainly one of the motivations behind this project.¹² It should be mentioned in passing here, that this revision, known as the *Nova Vulgata*, was promulgated only 72 years later, by Pope St John Paul II in 1979.¹³

Since 1940s, the openness towards the original texts of the Bible has become more explicit in papal documents. Pope Pius XII's 1943 encyclical, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, on Promoting Biblical Studies, marks this change. While reiterating the honor and prestige the Latin Vulgate edition has enjoyed in the Catholic Church, especially in the decree of the Council of the Trent (no. 1), Pius XII not only welcomes the use of the original texts in the study of the Scripture (nos. 20, 21, he even makes explicit the following clarification:

Nor is it forbidden by the decree of the Council of Trent to make translations into the vulgar tongue, even directly from the original texts themselves, for the use and benefit of the faithful and for the better understanding of the divine word, as We know to have been already done in a laudable manner in many countries with the approval of the Ecclesiastical authority. (no. 22)¹⁴

12 Dom Adrian Weld-Blundell, OSB, "The Revision of the Vulgate Bible," *Scripture* 2 (1947) 100–105, esp. 100.

13 John Paul II, *Scripturarum Thesaurus: Apostolic Constitution by Which the New Vulgate Edition of the Holy Bible is Declared "Typical" and Is Promulgated* (April 25, 1979), https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19790425_scripturarum-thesaurus.html.

14 Latin original: *Ac ne id quidem Tridentini Concilii decreto prohibetur, quominus nempe ad christifidelium usum et bonum et ad faciliorem divini eloquii intelligentiam, conversiones in vulgatas linguas conficiantur; eaeque etiam ex ipsis primigeniis textibus, ut iam multis in regionibus, approbante Ecclesiae auctoritate, laudabiliter factum esse novimus.*

In other words, our brief history of the ecclesiastical position on biblical translation shows that, before Pius XII, in 1924, when the *Primum Concilium Sinense* was convoked, if a Bible translation was to be produced, the normative Vorlage would have to be the Latin Vulgate. However, for any Bible translation project started after the beginning 1940s, the Vorlage(n) would probably be the original texts, i.e., the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

2. The Instructions on Bible Translation from the *Primum Concilium Sinense*

Since Christian missionaries first set foot in China in the 8th century, during the Tang Dynasty, they started to present biblical stories and teachings to the Chinese people. However, these earlier efforts either summarize or, at best, paraphrase passages from the Bible. Examples of this type of work include the Nestorian Corpus¹⁵ and Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu Sheyi* (天主實義).

The first systematic effort to translate the Bible into Chinese started in the 17th century. ¹⁶Jean Basset MEP (白日升, 1662–1707) translated most of the New Testament from the Latin Vulgate. Basset's translation made its way to the British Museum and later became one of the references that Robert Morrison consulted as he was making his own Bible translation into Chinese.

Later, two Franciscans, Antonio Langi (梅述聖, + 1727) and Francesco Jovino (麥傳世, 1677–1737) started to produce their own Chinese translation of the Bible. However, they were soon stopped by their confrere Carlo Horatii (1673–1759). Horatii made his decision on two grounds. The first question is when to translate: He believed a Chinese translation of the Bible should only be produced when a significant number of the Chinese people have converted. The second question is who to translate: He believed, in order that the translation be “accurate, elegant, and solemn”, it would require a joint effort of Europeans and Chinese.

Louis de Poirot, SJ (賀清泰, 1753–1831) translated the entire New Testament and part of the Old Testament From the *Latin Vulgate* into Chinese. However, he was not able to obtain the papal approval to print his translation. They had been stored in the Church of the Savior (救世主堂), or Beitang (北

15 For a recent collection of this corpus, see: 吳昶興〔編注〕,《大秦景教流行中國碑: 大秦景教文獻釋義》, 漢語基督教經典文庫集成 1: 十六世紀前篇 (新北市: 橄欖出版, 2015年)。

16 Here I follow: 鍾鳴旦〔著〕, 尚揚〔譯〕,〈聖經在十七世紀的中國〉,《神學論集》126期 (2000冬): 537–565頁, 尤見: 頁538–539。

堂, the North Church), in Beijing. Ten years ago, they were published by the Zhonghua Book Company in Beijing.¹⁷

2.1. The First Principle: Faithfulness to the Vorlage(n)

Before the *Primum Concilium Sinense*, there was no other major attempts to render the Bible into Chinese. One of the few exceptions would be a complete translation of the New Testament from the Vulgate into Chinese by a single Jesuit parish priest Xiao Jingshan (蕭靜山), first edition completed in 1922. Apart from it, the only access that the Chinese Catholics in general had to biblical passages at the time would be representations from summaries and paraphrases and catechetical books. It is against this historical background, the absence of a complete Bible in Chinese, that the Concilium decided to form a *peritorum commissio seu comitatus pro versione Sinica SS. Scripturarum* (Commission or Group of Experts for the Chinese Version of the Most Holy Scriptures).¹⁸

Here we observe the *Concilium*'s first vision of the translation of the Bible into Chinese: Namely that the translation would be carried out by a group of *peritorum*, experts. This is not a small point to make. There is not a doubt that all those who had worked on the translation of the Bible into Chinese were learned. Nevertheless, by the beginning of the 20th century, the field of the biblical studies had become so advanced, with so many discoveries, that translators without proper academic training may be lacking in both some significant knowledge, awareness, and skills in producing an up-to-date and satisfactory translation of the Bible.

The Concilium does not make clear which text would serve as the *Vorlage* of the intended translation. If we are to be faithful to the mind of the Concilium fathers, then we must insist that the Latin Vulgate be the *Vorlage* of the translation. However, as we have seen, soon after the Concilium, there was a more positive attitude in the Church towards translating the Bible directly from the original texts. In addition to the paragraphs from the *Divino Afflante Spiritu* above, these words from the same document should also be heard:

[T]herefore we ought to explain the original text which, having been written by the inspired author himself, has more authority and greater weight than

17 賀清泰, 《古新聖經殘稿(全9冊)》, (北京: 中華書局, 2014年)。

18 See the heading of Book I, Title 8, Chapter 2 of the Acta of the *Concilium*. See: *Episcopatus Sinarum, Primum Concilium Sinense: Anno 1924* (Zi-Ka-Wei [徐家匯]: Typographia Missionis Catholicae [T'ou-Sè-Wè 土山灣], 1961), 33.

Latin original

any even the very best translation, whether ancient or modern. (no. 16)¹⁹

A few decades later, the Second Vatican Council would further teach that:

Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful. That is why the Church from the very beginning accepted as her own that very ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament which is called the septuagint; and she has always given a place of honor to other Eastern translations and Latin ones especially the Latin translation known as the vulgate. But since the word of God should be accessible at all times, the Church by her authority and with maternal concern sees to it that suitable and correct translations are made into different languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred books. (no. 22)²⁰

In this paragraph, the importance of the original texts is specially highlighted. Compared to the article of the *Concilium*, DAS and DV 22 do present us with a fresh attitude towards the original texts. Nevertheless, this should not surprise us, as that was the time when the biblical movement gained full momentum in Catholicism.

In performing translation of any *Vorlage*, one of the major issues is the attitude towards it. None of these documents explicitly demand faithfulness in translation. That certainly does not mean that it is not required. On the contrary, it stands to common sense that this requirement is simply presupposed, and even to the highest degree possible. However, the word “possible” here does imply that another principle should be at work in any translation exercise, i.e., expressiveness, or readability.

2.2. The Second Principle: Expressiveness or Readability

This principle refers to how the *Vorlage* of a translation be rendered into the target language; in other words, how easy the translation is for the target audience to read and understand while being as faithful as possible to the *Vorlage*. It is translational decisions on this level that truly makes translation an art. The linguistic knowledge and skills needed for a good translation require experience, and very often, talent. Thus, the many challenges inherent in the

19 Latin original: *igitur ratione primigenium illum textum explanari oportet, qui ab ipso sacro auctore conscriptus maiorem auctoritatem maiusque pondus habet, quam quaelibet, utut optima, sive antiqua sive recentior conversio.*

20 Latin original: *Christifidelibus aditus ad Sacram Scripturam late pateat oportet. Qua de causa Ecclesia inde ab initiis graecam illam antiquissimam Veteris Testamenti versionem a LXX viris nuncupatam ut suam suscepit; alias vero versiones orientales et versiones latinas, praecipue illam quam Vulgatam vocant, semper in honore habet. Cum autem verbum Dei omnibus temporibus praesto esse debeat, Ecclesia materna sollicitudine curat, ut aptae ac rectae exarentur in varias linguas versiones, praesertim ex primigenis Sacrorum Librorum textibus.*

act of the translation is not difficult to imagine. As the saying goes, *Traduttore, traditore* (the translator of a text is its traitor).

While the *Primum Concilium Sinense* does not make any explicit pronouncement on faithfulness, it does on the principle of readability:

The translation of the Scriptures should indeed be in an elegant but at the same time simple style, so that it can be easily understood by all. (no. 36)²¹

The key word in this article, I contend, is “simple”. The purpose clause of this article dictates it: the translation be *easily understood* by *all*. In contrast to the principle of faithfulness, which is absent in the Acta of the *Concilium* but, I believe, is implicitly presupposed, the *Concilium* seems to favor readability. If this principle can be construed as taking more into account the context in which the Bible is to be enculturated, and thus be considered as carrying a more pastoral tone, then it does indeed conform to the spirit of the *Concilium*.

Concerning this spirit of the *Concilium*, here let me offer just one example, as the length of this paper constrains me. At the end of the Acta, all the *vota et postulata*, or requests, made by the *Concilium* fathers to the Holy See are listed. *Votum XVI* deserves our special attention:

The *Concilium Sinense* humbly requests from the Holy See a pardon for all China, by virtue of which it may be dispensed with, from the law of abstinence and fasting on the last day and the first fifteen days of the Chinese lunar year; likewise on the fifth of the fifth month and on the fifteenth of the eighth month. For in these aforesaid days, from a common and very ancient custom, it is almost impossible for the Chinese to observe fasting or abstinence.²²

This is no trivial dispensation, especially for the Lunar New Year, for the beginning of Lent, Ash Wednesday, which is a day of fasting and abstinence according to the Roman tradition, often falls within the days of dispensation. For instance, this year, 2024, Ash Wednesday was February 14, which was the fifth day of the Lunar New Year. This *votum* was granted by Holy See. This, I contend, is one of the clearest examples that the *Concilium* has a strong spirit of pastoral sensitivity, if not inculturation, with the blessing from the Holy See.

21 Our translation of the Latin original: *Versio Scripturarum eleganti quidem at simul simplici stylo constet, ita ut ab omnibus facile intelligi possit.*

22 Our translation of the original Latin: *Concilium Sinense humiliter a Sancta Sede petit indultum pro totis Sinis, vi cuius dispensari queat, quando tempus id ferat, a lege abstinenciae et ieiunii ultima die et quindecim prioribus diebus anni lunaris Sinici; item die quinta quintae lunae et die decima quinta lunae octavae. His enim praedictis diebus, ex communi et vetustissima consuetudine, fere impossibile est ut Sinenses ieiunium aut abstinenciam servant.*

The instruction of the *Concilium* concerning the formation of the team of translators, as stated in art. 35, may serve as one of the measures to safeguard the readability of the translated Bible:

The First Chinese Council considers that a group should be established, consisting of several missionaries and Chinese priests...²³

The expectation that the group is composed not only of foreign missionaries, but also local Chinese priests, recalls the aforementioned point made by the Franciscan missionary Horatii. It also echoes the spirit of *Maximum Illud* to make room for a higher degree of participation in Church life by the local clergy, and thus rendering the mission territories more of a local face. This point is also made explicit by the *Concilium* (art. 17). It stands to reason to suppose that with the participation of experts, whose first language is Chinese, there would be a much higher probability that the biblical translation produced could be more readable by the Chinese faithful at large.

However, a detailed reading of this article does make one wonder whether what is being instructed fits well with this spirit of pastoral sensitivity. Let us read again the sentence in art. 35, this time in full:

The First Chinese Council considers that a group should be established, consisting of several missionaries and Chinese priests, with the duty to translate the Holy Scriptures, and in their entirety, into the Chinese language.²⁴

The issue here is the number of the target language. The accusative in the prepositional phrase in *Sinicam linguam* is in the singular. This does not look intriguing until one compares this article with art. 39, the one on the translation of catechetical books and common prayers:

The First Chinese Council decrees that a committee should be constituted, from at least five missionary experts or priests, whose task is to compose a single Mandarin language, for all China, a catechism and a text of the common law, later, by those who are interested, *to translate it into different Chinese languages*.²⁵ (My emphasis)

23 Our translation of the Latin original: *Primum Concilium Sinense censet constituendum esse (secundum) comitatum, ex pluribus missionariis et sacerdotibus sinensibus constantem*. The *secundum* in the brackets is omitted in the translation of the article above.

24 Our translation of the Latin original: *Primum Concilium Sinense censet constituendum esse (secundum) comitatum, ex pluribus missionariis et sacerdotibus sinensibus constantem, cuius officium sit Sacras Scripturas, easque integras, in Sinicam linguam vertere*. The *secundum* in the brackets is omitted in the translation of the article above.

25 Our translation of the Latin original: *Primum Concilium Sinense censet constituendum esse, ex quinque saltem peritis missionariis vel sacerdotibus, (tertium) Comitatum, cuius munus sit compondere lingua mandarinica unum, pro totis Sinis, catechism et communium precum textum, postea, ab eis quorum interest, in diversas linguas sinicas vertendum*. The *tertium* in the brackets is omitted in the

What is striking is the recognition of the existence of many Chinese languages by the *Concilium*. Moreover, although the *Concilium* does consider of primal importance to first produce one Mandarin translation of a catechism, as the standard catechism in Chinese as it were, it does make provision for further translation of it into the different Chinese languages. This sounds much more pastorally sensitive than the one, uniformed translation of the Bible in Chinese, as art. 35 decrees.

What further complicates our evaluation of the pastoral sensitivity that the *Concilium* gives to the Chinese translation of the Bible is its instruction on the Chinese catechisms in another article:

The catechism will consist of three books.

1 The first will be a small catechism for boys and girls who are being prepared for their first communion, as well as for the old and uncouth, whether catechumens or Christians, who are unable to learn larger and more profound things.

2 And the second will be the ordinary or intermediate catechism for elementary mission schools; for catechumens and ordinary Christians; pro-public recitation in the church.

3 Finally, there will be a larger catechism for catechists, for teachers, for secondary and higher schools, and for those Christians who wish to learn a broader and more refined doctrine.²⁶ (Art. 41)

The *Concilium* provides provision for creating different versions of the catechism to match with the different audience. In other words, the *Concilium*, back in the 1920s, was already able to plan what marketing specialists were able to articulate only one decade later, “product differentiation”²⁷. It is striking, at least to me, that the *Concilium* would make no provision of this kind for biblical translation. The reason for this deeper reflection on and stronger devotion to the production of catechisms was probably that catechisms played a much more significant role in Catholic life than the Bible at the time.²⁸

translation of the article above.

26 Our translation of the Latin original:

Ex tribus libris constabit catechismus.

1 Primus erit catechismus parvus pro pueris et puellis qui praeparantur ad primam communionem, necnon pro senibus et rudibus, sive catechumenis sive christianis, qui ampliora et profundiora discere nequeunt.

27 See: Edward Chamberlin, *The Theory of Monopolistic Competition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933).

28 雷立柏 [Leopold Leeb, 著], 〈1924年的全國主教會議與公教對華夏文化的評價〉, 載於: 《法流十道: 近代中國基督教區域史研究》, 黃文江、郭偉聯、劉義章 [編], (香港: 建道神學院出版, 2013年), 173 – 192頁, 尤見: 頁180.

That said, the *Concilium*'s instruction that annotations must be added to the Chinese translation of the Bible in particular (see: art. 35), and the universal norm requiring it at the time, could be considered in support of readability.

2.3. Gratitude and Praise to the Predecessors

As we have seen, this is not the first attempt to render the Bible into Chinese. The *Concilium* fathers were aware of this. Thus, during the *Concilium*, they also offered instructions as to how to treat these translations:

To those who, having already begun this most important work, translated one or the other part of the Scriptures into the Chinese language, the First Chinese Council expresses an equal sense of gratitude, and gives just praise.
(art. 39)²⁹

It is certainly important that we render gratitude and praise to the intellectual labor of our predecessors, and their love and passion for both the Word of God and missionary work. Nevertheless, it is still surprising that no provision was made in the Concilium to make use of these previously produced biblical translation, albeit not complete ones of the Bible. This stands in stark contrast to biblical translators even from other denominations, e.g., Robert Morrison, who took the initiative to obtain copies of earlier biblical translations by Catholic predecessors and consulted these translations when producing their own. The Concilium indeed did not forbid translators from doing so, but it seems to me that it would be a good advice to give to newcomers to the project, especially when the *Vorlage* concerned was still the Latin Vulgate, from which a number of Catholic translations into Chinese had been produced.

In this section, we have briefly sketched the principles that formed the vision of a Chinese translation of the Bible of the *Primum Concilium Sinense*. We have attempted to bring these principles into dialogue both within the Concilium itself and with its historical contexts, including that which preceded it and that which followed it immediately. Unfortunately, even with the provision in the Concilium for forming this group of experts for the translation of the Bible into Chinese, due to the lack of qualified experts fluent in both biblical languages and modern Colloquial Chinese (白話文),³⁰ no such group was ever

29 Our translation of the Latin original: *Eis qui, hoc maximi momenti opus iam aggressi, unam alteramve partem Scripturarum in linguam sinicam verterunt, Primum Concilium Sinense quos par est grati animi sensus exprimit, iustamque tribuit laudem.*

30 Letter from G. de Jonghe to Fr. Guimbretiere (Istituto Biblico Pontificio, Jerusalem), September 20, 1930, the Vatican Apostolic Archive (hereafter referred to as AAV), Archivio della Nunziatura Apostolica in Cina (Arch. Nunz. Cina), b. 85, p. 211; Celso Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933): Memorie de fatti e di idee*, vol. II (Rome: Via di Propaganda, 1947), p. 5. Many thanks to Bibiana Vong

formed; while fortunately, a few years later, someone coming from the other side of the globe would form a group of similar nature, and finally produce a complete Chinese translation of the Bible.

In our final section, we will take a look at one of the most commonly used Chinese translation of the Bible in our time, the *Studium Franciscanum* version, and to make preliminary evaluation as to whether the biblical vision of the *Concilium* has been fulfilled by one of the translations coming after it.³¹

3. The Studium Franciscanum Version

The *Studium Franciscum* version (hereafter SF version), or more commonly known as the Sigao version (思高), for the name sake of Don Scotus, ofm, is the Chinese version most people use. Gabriele Allegra (雷永明), ofm, started the translation as his personal project in 1935, and gathered a group of devoted translators ten years later in Beijing, founding the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*. In 1948, the *Studium* moved to Hong Kong. Another decade later, the translation of all the books in the Bible into Chinese was finally completed in 1961.

Should the *SF* version be considered, at least indirectly, the fruit of the *Concilium*? If one is referred only to the *SF* version, especially its preface, and publications by the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, one would probably give a negative answer, because the *Concilium* is simply not mentioned. However, Allegra's memoir would probably give us a different answer.³²

Allegra started to dream about this project during his study for the first cycle in Rome. First, in 1928, he came to know that his confrere, John of Montecorvino, who in 1307 established the archdiocese of Khanbaliq (汗八里), then the capital of the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty, now Beijing, and who was the first archbishop of the same diocese, translated the New Testament and the Psalms into the local language of the time, the Mongolic language. However, Montecorvino's translation had soon been lost forever. Second, one year later, who with great generosity shared this bibliography with me.

31 The author is aware of the other Catholic Chinese translations of the Bible produced after the Concilium, for instance, the New Testament and Psalms by John Wu Ching-hsiung (吳經熊), the New Testament (《新經全書》) by 狄守仁 (P. Petit S.J.), 李山甫 (G. Litvanyi), 申自天 (R. Archen) and 蕭舜華, and the Gospels (《救世福音》) by Ma Xiangbo (馬相伯). The decision to focus solely on the SF version is due to its long-lasting popularity among Chinese Catholics and its being used as the version in which Chinese liturgy uses.

32 Here I follow a doctoral dissertation recently defended on the subject: Raissa De Gruttola, "'And the Word Became Chinese' Gabriele Allegra and the Chinese Catholic Bible: History, Process, and Translation Analysis," (PhD Dissertation, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2017), esp. 57–58.

in 1929, Allegra met a Chinese Franciscan friar, Gao Siqian (高思謙) in Rome. Gao told Allegra that, apart from Xiao's translation of the New Testament from the Vulgate into Chinese, the Chinese faithful had no other access to the Word of God in their native tongue. Gao also told Allegra about the *Primum Concilium Sinense* and its provision for a complete Chinese translation of the Bible, but nothing concrete was done after the Concilium. It was at this point, according to the memoir, that Allegra decided to become a missionary to China and to translate the Bible into Chinese.

There is little doubt, therefore, that Allegra was indeed influenced by the *Concilium*, at least partly, to devote himself to rendering the Scripture into Chinese. Our final task today, then, is to ascertain whether the project that was led by him also inherited the biblical vision of the *Concilium*. To do so, we have to bring into dialogue the SF version with the two principles identified above.

3.1. The First Principle: Faithfulness to the *Vorlage*(n)

In the Preface to the SF version, it is stated that the translation is based on the original texts, i.e., the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Other ancient textual traditions would be consulted if need be.³³ This principle was reiterated later by 陳維統 ofm,³⁴ one of Allegra's students who participated in the translation of the *SF* version.

This translation decision was brave on Allegra's side. One must remember that in 1930s, openness to the use of the original texts was not as common as it would be a decade later. Thus, to be determined to use them as the *Vorlagen* for one's Bible translation could be considered quite a progressive move.

However, when one reads the SF version closely, one would at times discover traces that agree with the Vulgate against the original texts. Here I shall offer two examples, all of which are from the earliest chapters of the Book of Genesis.

Our first example is from Gen 2:4, the verse that is famous for the demarcation between the first and the second creation account in its middle. The comparison of the verse in its different versions is as follows:

這是創造天地的來歷：在上主天主創造天地時，（《思高》）

33 思高聖經學會，《聖經》，（香港：思高聖經學會，1968年），頁III–IV。

34 陳維統〔著〕，〈思高翻譯聖經的原則及方法〉，載於：《思高五十：思高聖經學會五十週年紀念特刊》，林錦玲等〔編〕，（香港：思高聖經學會，1995年），頁77–79，尤見：頁77。

Istae generationes caeli et terrae quando creatae sunt, in die quo fecit Dominus Deus caelum et terram (Vulgate)

Αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὅτε ἐγένετο, ἥ ἡμέρα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν (LXX)

וְשֵׁמִים: אֵלֶּיךָ יְהוָה יְהִי שְׁמִי בְּיוֹם בְּרִיאָתְךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ תְּלִילָהּ אֵלֶּיךָ

Istae sunt generationes caeli et terrae, quando creata sunt. In die quo fecit Dominus Deus terram et caelum (Nova Vulgata)

After comparing the SF version of Gen 2:4 with Latin Vulgate, the Septuagint, the Masoretic Text, and the Nova Vulgata, shows that the SF version aligns with the Vulgate, and the Vulgate in turns with the Septuagint. These three versions disagree with the Hebrew, while the Nova Vulgata agrees with the Hebrew. The last observation renders the agreement of the SF version of this verse with the Vulgate against the Hebrew even more apparent.

This example is important for source critical reasons. One of the observations that the second creation account begins at Gen 2:4b is the swap of the sequence from “heaven and earth” in Gen 2:4a to “earth and heaven” in Gen 2:4b. The SF version, following the Vulgate, hinders its readers from this observation.

One could argue that the SF version translated Gen 2:4b the way it did for readability reason. 天地, or heaven (and) earth, sounds idiomatic in Chinese, while 地天, earth (and) heaven, would be very awkward. I wonder whether this argument is sufficient, for it is not impossible to translate it in such a way that the translation could sound idiomatic on the one hand, while remain faithful to the original, on the other; for instance, 大地與高天, or simply, 地和天.

Our second example is taken from Gen 4:11. It is part of the LORD’s speech to Cain after he killed Abel, his brother. It reads, in its various versions, as follows:

你現在是地上所咒罵的人，地張開口由你手中接收了你弟弟的血，

nunc igitur maledictus eris super terram, quae aperuit os suum et suscepit sanguinem fratris tui de manu tua (Latina Vulgata)

καὶ νῦν ἐπικατάρατος σὺ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, ἣ ἔχανε τὸ στόμα αὐτῆς δεῦξασθαι τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου ἐκ τῆς χειρός σου·

וְעַתָּה אֵרָרְךָ אֶת הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר פָּתְחָהּ אֶת־פִּיהָ לְקַח מִיְּדְּךָ אֶת־דַּם אָדָם מִיָּדְךָ:

Nunc igitur maledictus eris procul ab agro, qui aperuit os suum et suscepit

Let us focus on the highlighted parts. One observes that the SF version, again agrees with the Latin Vulgate, but this time not only against the Hebrew, but even the Greek, while the Nova Vulgata agrees with the Hebrew.

This example is also significant in the pre-historical narrative, this time not for source critical reason but for a theological one. This verse is the key to associate Cain with both Adam, Noah, and eventually the people at Babel, in the chain of a gradual alienation between the earth and humanity. If one reads the SF version alone, this motif would be greatly diminished.

These two examples certainly do not exhaust the agreement of the SF version, in the Old Testament part, with the Latin Vulgate against the Hebrew text, and their occurrences seem to suggest that, at least at times, the SF version is faithful to the Vulgate rather than to the original texts. On the other hand, in the defense of the SF version, it does disagree at times with the Latin Vulgate. For instance, its creative faithfulness to the Hebrew when translating Gen 3:15, the so-called protoevangelium, against the Vulgate, which is also corrected in the Nova Latina, as well as its six, instead of seven, gifts of Holy Spirit in Isa 11:2, with in the seventh, which appears only in the Vulgate, to be put in square brackets.

3.2. The Second Principle: Readability

The complete consistence of the SF version with the implementation of this principle is self-evident. It is embodied in Allegra's decision to use only plain-spoken Chinese, but not Literary Chinese, for his translation.

As summarized by Sisto Rosso, ofm., one of Allegra's confreres, one methodological principle of Allegra's translation is:

In accordance with the proviso of the Plenary Council of Shang-hai, the Mandarin or pai hua type of language is used, because it is understood by all.³⁵

With regard to the need of the readers using the different Chinese languages, nowhere in the SF version or the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* documents indicates the awareness or the intention of producing different Chinese translations. For Chinese languages that share the same set, or similar sets, of standard Chinese script, the problem may not be that apparent. For instance, the

³⁵ Sisto A. Rosso, "A New Catholic Chinese Version of the Bible," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 9 (1947): 96–100, esp. 97.

SF version, which appears to be based on Mandarin, is in general well received by the Cantonese speaking people.³⁶ With the constraint of space, here I offer only one example. The more poetic name of Jerusalem in Biblical Hebrew is יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, transliterated as *šr̥yōn*. The SF version renders this name in Chinese as 熙雍, or *Xīyōng* in Mandarin, but it is pronounced rather differently in Cantonese: *hei'jung'*. The problem is with the pronunciation of the first character, or syllable, and thus in the transliteration of the name of the place in Cantonese no longer corresponds to its Hebrew pronunciation. Thus, in other liturgical or religious compositions in Cantonese, the Hebrew name is transliterated differently: 西雍, or *sai'jung'*. For Chinese Catholics who are well informed, this may not be an issue, but I did personally meet people in parishes, especially young people, who did not know that the two names in Cantonese in fact transliterate the same Hebrew name.

A final reflection on readability. It is indeed important to offer the readers a translation that is easily understandable. However, if it is a collection of texts that was composed and collecting thousands of years ago, I wonder whether it is a good idea to allow the readers to understand easily the non-readability of the text. A case in point is God's revelation of His name to Moses in Exod 3:14. It reads, in its various versions, as follows:

天主向梅瑟說：「我是自有者。」又說：「你要這樣對以色列子民說：那『自有者』打發我到你們這裏來。」（《思高》）

dixit Deus ad Mosen ego sum qui sum ait sic dices filiis Israhel qui est misit me ad vos (Vulgate)

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωϋσῆν Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν· καὶ εἶπεν Οὕτως ἐρεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ Ὁ ὢν ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

אֵלֵיכֶם: שְׁלַחְנִי אֲתֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבְנֵי תַאמֶר כֹּה יֹאמַר אֲתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶיךָ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הֵם וַיֹּאמֶר

神對摩西說：「『我是』就是『我是』。」他又說：「你要對以色列人這樣說，是那位『我是』派我來到你們這裏。」（《新漢語譯本》）

The SF version clearly offers better readability as a literary text, in contrast to the 《新漢語譯本》，a recent, 2014, Protestant translation produced in Hong Kong. However, this readability seems to be at the cost of faithfulness,

36 Nevertheless, the difference in script of the two languages is still significant and has generated great difficulties in schools, as this article from a publication by the Educational Bureau of Hong Kong SAR demonstrates: 丁麗娜〔著〕，〈談粵語與共同語的異同以及對當前香港推廣普通話的看法〉，載於：《集思廣益（四輯）：普通話學與教經驗分享》，香港特別行政局政府教育局課程發展處中國語文教育組〔編〕，（香港：香港教育局，2013年），頁219-222，尤見：頁220，取自：https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/tc/curriculum-development/kla/chi-edu/resources/primary/pt/hjisi4_23.pdf。又見：盧興翹〔著〕，〈方言和普通話詞匯的形義比較分類問題——以香港粵方言為例〉，《中國語文通訊》第89-90期〔合刊〕（2010年3月）：頁113-123。

in this case both to the Hebrew and even to the Latin Vulgate. One wonders, if the biblical text intends to express a sense of mystery, a sense of incomprehensibility, then non-readability would, against intuition, be the expressiveness that this principle aims at.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have first briefly surveyed the history of biblical translation, with a focus on its practice in Catholicism until mid-20th century. We have seen how the Latin Vulgate occupied the center stage and the gradual openness to the original texts in the Church. We have then read the few articles on Bible translation in the *Primum Concilium Sinense*, and noted that, despite its vision to form a group of biblical experts to take up the translation task, due to the lack of experts specialized in both the biblical languages and the Chinese language, the group never formed. From our reading of the Acta of the Concilium, we have also attempted to sketch its vision of the translation based on two major pillars, faithfulness and readability, probably with a stronger emphasis on the latter. We have also read a few verses from the currently most commonly used Chinese translation of the Bible, the Studium Franciscanum version, to see how far we have progressed in the project envisioned by the Concilium and whether its vision has already been fulfilled.

There is indeed no simple answer to the question. It is certainly not a negative one, as Fra Allegra and his collaborators achieved what was almost humanly unachievable in that historical circumstances. Their contribution to generations of Chinese Catholics will never be forgotten, not by us, and I believe, not by God either. Our reflection on the whole journey today points to us a simple fact, no matter it is the *Concilium*, or the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, or translators of whatever text, ultimately the challenges they face, is not “either faithfulness or readability”, but rather, how to strike the balance between the two. This is an art that there is no recipe for. One will make an excellent judgment in one place and may be a less satisfactory one in another. What is more, this is an exercise that has to be repeated again and again. For two reasons: first, theologically, if we believe that the Word of God is inexhaustible source of meaning, it follows that it is impossible for anyone to claim that a certain translation has exhausted its meaning; second, technically, as the languages that people use every day evolve as human history progresses, it is impossible for one translation, however good it is, to be sufficient for all generations to come.

If Jacob was allowed to, and indeed praised because of, his struggle with God, then we, as members of the New Israel, I believe, are also allowed to struggle with the Word of God, and in this particular case, to struggle with how to best represent it to the Chinese people today. And if we are members of the *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, then I would like to propose that we are also users, if not collaborators, of the *Biblia Sinensis semper reformanda*.

Three Shanghai General Meetings and Catholic Publishing in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

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Abstract

Focusing on three crucial meetings held in Shanghai that shaped the landscape of Catholic publishing during the first half of the twentieth century, this article highlights the significance of the Catholic press in community-building and knowledge communication, as well as the internal constant co-ordinating efforts to bridge gaps between communities.

The continuous surveys of the Catholic press conducted by Frederick C. Dietz and Rudolf Löwenthal from 1935 on provided detailed documentation of the state and progress of Catholic publishing during this period. Based upon the comprehensive data gathered from the surveys, it could be seen that the Catholic publishing speeded up especially from the 1920s onward. The three Shanghai general meetings were to a certain extent fostered vigor and resilience during an unsettling period, namely the 1924 First Plenary Council, the 1935 All-China General Congress of Catholic Action, and the 1947 Catholic Press Convention.

The 1924 First Plenary Council of China, convened by Celso Costantini, aimed to co-ordinate mission work. The relevant decrees on journals and books emphasized countering misinformation, engaging with society, and establishing printing plants. The Synodal Commission for schools, books, and press was founded, and later, the Lumen News Service was established. Lumen played a vital role in coordinating news dissemination among Catholic publications, enabling more local religious presses to grow.

The 1935 All-China General Congress of Catholic Action was held in a more stable national situation. The Catholic press received special attention. Bonaventure Péroquin proposed duplicating successful publications in different vicariates to increase circulation without much cost. His proposal was tested with *Guanghua Bao*, which was expanded from Jinan to Wuchang. *Guanghua Bao* made significant contributions to society, especially during the Sino-Japanese War, by reporting war-related contents.

The 1947 Catholic Press Convention was held in a post-war context to revitalize Catholic publishing. It was a smaller-scale meeting but important. The meeting reached decisions on writer training, book production, circulation, and Catholic terminology. The Catholic Central Bureau, the successor of the Synodal Commission, implemented these decisions. It compiled a catalogue of Catholic books, surveyed European literature for translation, published a “Reading Guide”, and aimed to establish libraries and a dictionary of Catholic terms.

In conclusion, the three Shanghai general meetings were instrumental in co-ordinating the development of the Catholic press in the first half of the twentieth century. They helped overcome the challenges of divisions of church management in China and demonstrated the Church’s continuous efforts in cultural engagement and social participation, leaving a valuable legacy for historical studies.

Keywords: First Plenary Council of China, All-China General Congress of Catholic Action, Catholic Press Convention, Catholic publishing; co-ordination

三次上海大会与二十世纪上半叶天主教出版事业¹

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摘要

二十世纪上半叶，在华天主教出版事业无论是在规模上还是组织形式上都出现了显著的增长。这一现象的重要性体现在两个方面：对当时的中国教会而言，出版物促进了教会内部与外部的沟通；对今天的研究者来说，这些记录包含了大量教会内外的历史信息，对于丰富历史认识具有重要价值。本文通过三次上海大会揭示了这一过程的内部推动机制：1924年的首届教务会议、1935年的中华公教进行会全国教区代表大会以及1947年的全国天主教出版会议。这些会议所促成的协作机制为出版活动注入了韧性和效率，使其能够在动荡时期持续发展与繁荣。教务会议通过规范出版实践和成立专门的中央组织，开启了跨修会和跨国界的合作。秉持这些指导方针，1935年中华公教进行会的天主教记者代表汇聚一堂，探讨促使天主教出版物蓬勃发展的实际方法。尽管在抗日战争期间遭遇挫折，但天主教出版事业在1947年出版会议召开后迅速恢复，这一会议通过中央组织加强了跨界的合作。三次会议不仅展示了天主教出版的历史轨迹，也展现了教会持续努力弥合不同群体之间隔阂的努力。

关键词：首届教务会议；中华公教进行会全国教区代表大会；全国天主教出版会议；天主教会出版；协作

¹ 本文英文版参见 Zhiyuan Pan, “Three Shanghai General Meetings and Catholic Publishing in the First Half of the Twentieth Century” *Religions* 2024, 15, no. 10: 1178. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15101178>

1. 引言

1.1. 中国天主教报刊的意义

1940年，燕京大学的罗文达博士（Rudolf Löwenthal），提出了一个问题——他从自1936年起，就对中国的天主教报刊进行了深入调查：宗教报刊对于出版者、读者以及整个国家的意义何在？¹中国的宗教出版物一方面促进了信众间共同体的建立、另一方面通过大规模印刷技术进行了知识传播。²这些积累的出版资料构成了一大批极具历史研究价值的记录。

新教报刊在近代中国史中展示了其普遍意义。戈公振（1890 – 1935），中国新闻学的先驱之一，认为1911年辛亥革命的成功，促使中国政治体制从帝制转向共和制，正是基于报纸所普及的改革和革命思想。³近年来，对新教传教期刊的研究也承认了它们在介绍西方知识、启发具有远见的中国知识分子方面的贡献，例如受到广泛研究的、创刊于1868年的《万国公报》。⁴

与新教报刊的在重要历史节点的参与程度相比，天主教报刊似乎错过了转型阶段。对新教报刊的调查⁵在某种程度上证实了阿朗（Bernard Arens）提出的论断：“如果说某个地方能体现这一点，那肯定是在中国：天主教主要致力于是皈依工作，而新教使命则从事文化活动”。⁶然而，尽管起步相对较晚，天主教报刊在二十世纪上半叶迅速发展，这一点并未被研究者所忽视。例如对《益世报》这一民国时期重要报纸的社会议题的关注⁷，以及天主教报刊在抗日战争（1937 – 1945）期间的积极影响⁸，都展现了天主教报刊在社会中的作用。考虑到这些外部影响主要来自于内在力量的推动，探讨教会的出版机制能够揭示更多的深层内

1 Rudolf Löwenthal, Hung-shun Ch'en, T'ing-ch'ang Ku, and William W. Y. Liang, *The Religious Periodical Press in China with 7 Maps and 16 Charts*, 279.

2 Bödefeld, preface, I; Löwenthal et al., *ibid.*, 293.

3 戈公振，《中国报学史》，第22页。

4 Adrian Arthur Bennett, *Missionary Journalist in China: Young J. Allen and His Magazines, 1860–1883*; 赵晓兰、吴潮，《传教士中文报刊史》，第406–9页。

5 T'ing-ch'ang Ku, “The Protestant Press in China”, 126.

6 Bernard Arens, *Das Katholische Zeitungswesen in Ostasien und Ozeanien*, 24.

7 Theresa Ming Chuan Hsueh, “Action et Mémoire, Les Archives du Journal de Vincent Lebbe: I *Che Pao*”, pp. 29–38; 赵晓兰、吴潮，《传教士中文报刊史》，第379–80页；宋稚青，《雷鸣远神父与天津益世报》，第49–62页。

8 例如：唐晓峰、李韦编，《抗日战争时期基督宗教总要文献汇编》；张士伟，《谈〈圣教杂志〉的抗日救国宣传》；顾卫民，《1934年〈磐石杂志〉“公教与爱国”专号的民族立场》；马彬：《九一八事变后〈益世报〉对日舆论研究》；邓博雅，《1879–1949天主教中文报刊贡献初探：以〈益闻录〉〈圣心报〉〈圣教杂志〉为例》

情。

虽然有诸多解释天主教报刊发展的原因，但为了全面理解其背后的动因，仍然有必要对其内在动机进行更为深入的研究。本文旨在通过聚焦于上海1924年、1935年和1947年三次大会背后的教会努力，进一步改变外界对天主教在中国文化活动和参与上“惰性”的刻板印象。力图探讨天主教如何在中国的政治和社会背景下，持续致力于通过出版弥合不同群体之间的鸿沟，并参与中国社会的变革。本文主要利用天主教出版物，包括会议文件和会议记录，以及某些期刊和书籍作为案例，揭示三次会议对出版事业的规划的过程，及其对天主教出版发展的直接影响，以补充对近代中国社会出版活动的整体认识。

1.2. 历史轨迹与动因

得益于罗文达持续而科学的研究，天主教报刊的整体历史轨迹已得到了详细记录。近年来，基于这一具体数据集的研究分析了天主教报刊在中国的发展及其影响。⁹学者们普遍达成共识，认为天主教报刊自二十世纪二十年代起在数量和地理范围上都出现了快速增长。例如，从1917年到1935年，“天主教期刊的数量增加了527%，从22种增至115种。1917年，报纸在十个城市和镇上出版，到了1935年，这一数字增加到42个”。¹⁰到1939年，报纸的数量进一步增长到152种，出版地点增至61个。¹¹抗日战争时期严峻的战争局势对出版活动造成了沉重打击。然而，1939年至1943年间，仍有28种期刊得以创办。¹²

这一增长的动力来源既有国际背景，也有国内因素。考虑到各种意识形态通过现代媒体的广泛传播，罗马教廷不断强调天主教报刊在全球范围内发挥宣传作用的重要性和紧迫性。¹³二十世纪二十年代，随着修会的增加，更多资源被投入进传教区中，以克服出版工作中先前存在的人员和财力不足的问题¹⁴，中国的教会活动的活跃度和规模也相应增

9 梁爱香、黄哲，《在华天主教报刊活动的历史分期》；彭福英，《天主教在华刊物述略（1872-1949）》；张依纳，《抗日战争前我国天主教报刊发行动态》；周萍萍，《1879~1949年间的天主教中文报刊》

10 Rudolf Löwenthal, *The Catholic Press in China*, 281.

11 Löwenthal et al., *The Religious Periodical Press in China*, 8.

12 Rudolf Löwenthal, “The Catholic Press in China (A Supplement)”, 672.

13 Pius XI, *Siamo Ancora in Occasione Dell'inaugurazione Dell'Esposizione Mondiale Della Stampa Cattolica*, “International Press Exhibition”, *The Catholic Review*, July 4th 1935

14 Bernard Arens, *Manuel des Missions Catholiques*, 263.

长。¹⁵第一任宗座驻华代表刚恒毅（Celso Costantini, 1876-1958）鼓励通过报刊进行传播工作，这与中华民国国民政府在1928年清除了此前阻碍天主教出版工作的障碍的时机相契合。¹⁶

1912年中华民国的成立标志着在宪法上对基督宗教的正式宽容政策。1915年，美国耶稣会士卡方纳（Dennis John Kavanagh）认为，中华民国的建立是“敌视和频繁迫害的时期与更宽容的新时代之间的分界线”。¹⁷国民政府也在其于1930年正式实施的《出版法》中给予报纸比清朝《大清律例》及袁世凯政府的《报纸条例》更多的自由。¹⁸

然而，所有这些有利条件若未能根植于实际，也未必能促进出版的发展。在谈到某一报刊在中国的生命力时，通常情况下，它的存续往往取决于个体的努力。罗文达观察到：“如果他去世或调职，报纸的连续性就得不到保证，因为往往很难找到一位有兴趣且有能力的编辑或出版者”。¹⁹这不仅是零散且重复努力的巨大浪费，而且也是不可持续和不可预测的。

尽管近代时期天主教会在中国的管理由不同的修会和国籍根据地理位置来划分，出版事业对个人、单一传教区或某一团体来说都是一项庞大的任务。因此，它需要超越团体之别的密切合作。各次大会的一个主要目标是缩小这种差距，促进团结和协调。自1924年首次召开首届教务会议（Primum Concilium Sinense）起，上海举行的三次大会不仅强调了出版在原则上的重要性，而且确立了切实推动这一事业所需的原则、组织和实践。

2. 1924年首届中国教务会议

2.1. “关于期刊和书籍”

由刚恒毅召集的第一次首届教务会议于1924年5月15日至6月12日在上海徐家汇的圣依纳爵天主堂正式召开。此次大会召开时，中国正处于由1916年开始的军阀混战所带来的社会变革和政治分裂的背景下，教会迫切需要战略规划来应对民族主义的崛起，并在国内形势与外国联系之

15 彭福英，《天主教在华刊物述略（1872-1949）》

16 Löwenthal et al., *The Religious Periodical Press in China*, 10.

17 Dennis John Kavanagh, *Catholic Missions and the Chinese Republic*, 10.

18 戈公振，《中国报学史》，第332-33页；张莉，《南京国民政府新闻出版立法研究》

19 Löwenthal et al., *The Religious Periodical Press in China*, 293.

间寻求平衡。刚恒毅引导教会形成更加稳固的基础，作为一个整体应对全国范围内的新变化。正如时任江门教区主教、出席大会的华理柱神父（James Edward Walsh, 1891-1981）回顾时所评论的：“概而言之，整个大会的宗旨是为了协调和统一各传教团体的工作，以实现相互协助并取得更大成果”。²⁰

为了将分散在全国各地的教会活动联结起来，具体方法是制定一个统一的指南，供所有传教士遵循。大会决定以1917年的《教会法典》（*Canon Law*）为基准，并根据中国的实际需求加以调整。²¹全体57位主教中，共有47位出席了大会，并在6月庄严签署了《会议文件》，体现了在全国范围内对大会期间所制定的工作决策和指令的共识。该套861条法令和决议于1928年得到罗马教廷批准，成为中国所有天主教教区的行为规范。²²

与出版相关的第807至826号法令，分为四个章节，涉及期刊和书籍（“*De diariis et libris*”），揭示了当时教会在此方面的考虑和原则。尽管新教早已提到将期刊作为扩大影响的最佳手段之一²³，天主教报刊的首要关注点则是纠正“其他报纸在处理天主教问题时的错误”，不参与地方政治和地方问题的讨论，避免陷入争议。²⁴在此次大会期间，反击错误信息仍然是推广天主教报刊的主要动力，但教会也开始考虑更深入地与社会互动：“概述”和“第一部分”（第807至814号法令）呼吁通过报纸进行传播工作，反驳针对教会的诽谤，包括推广中国天主教报刊和发起天主教文学运动。与此同时，呼吁神职人员和平信徒合作，共同创作宗教与非宗教文学，以吸引更广泛的受众。²⁵“第六章”（第826号法令）则敦促在每个教区建立印刷厂。²⁶

同时，大会明确表示，报纸推广受到教会内部审查程序的制约，这也是决定天主教出版物数量和节奏的一个重要因素。这些原则在《教会法典》中得到了详细说明，即第23章“关于出版物的审查和禁令”（*De praevia censura librorum eorumque prohibition*，第1384–1391条，1393–

20 James Edward Walsh, “The Catholic Central Bureau of China”, 611.

21 Paul Wang Jiyou, *Le Premier Concile Plénier Chinois Shanghai 1924: Droit Canonique Missionnaire Forgé en Chine*, 271.

22 *Primum Concilium Sinense: Anno 1924 A Die 14 Maii Ad Diem 12 Iunii In Ecclesia S. Ignatii De Shanghai (Zi-Ka-We) Celebratum: Acta-Decreta et Normae-Vota, Etc.* (Alteria Editio)

23 “The Missionary Conference”, *The North-China Daily News*, May 18th 1877

24 *The Hongkong Catholic Register*, December 2nd, 1878

25 Paul Wang Jiyou, *Le Premier Concile Plénier Chinois Shanghai 1924*, 314.

26 *Primum Concilium Sinense*, 309.

1398条，1402 – 1403条，1405条)²⁷，以确保所有出版物符合高标准的神学准确性，避免任何误导和危险内容。“第二部分”和“第三部分”（第815至825号法令）忠实传达了几乎法典中整个章节的内容。²⁸

通过标准化出版实践，大会为将出版作为一项全国性项目奠定了基础，并继续形成一个中央机构来实施这些原则。根据1924年的决定，专门负责学校、书籍和出版的教会委员会于1928年成立。该组织不仅负责监督出版活动，更重要的是通过全国范围内的协调，为地方出版提供更高效率的资源。

2.2. 宠光通讯社

在大会法令获批后，“学校、书籍和出版委员会”（*De peritorum Commissione seu Comitatu pro scholis, libris et diariis*）正式启动。该委员会由五名神父组成，担任主席、副主席、秘书和成员，由刚恒毅挑选，并在其监督下运作。与出版相关的主要职能是推动并支持天主教书籍、报纸和翻译的出版与发行。²⁹

委员会制定了更高效的方法，以弥合散布在不同修会团体和发展阶段之间的差距。³⁰1935年初，委员会秘书戴日辉（Frederick C. Dietz）神父创办了“宠光通讯社”（*Lumen News Service*），推出了《宠光》（*Agentia Lumen*），这是一项每周发送三语新闻的新闻服务，旨在为报纸和期刊提供新闻。宠光通讯社在协调天主教出版物间信息传播方面起到了至关重要的作用。它作为一个集中编辑和审查信息的枢纽，提供了“现成可用”的内容，确保天主教媒体能够加强其应对当代问题的能力，并将天主教新闻传播到更远的地方。

罗文达认为，这项服务使更多的地方性宗教报刊能够维持并发展，因为它简化了这些报纸内容的制作。此外，设有一个集中收集并重新分发天主教相关新闻的机构，有助于打破地域和修会的限制。³¹为了促进宗教报刊的整体发展，他提出了一个以“宠光模式”为灵感的协调方案：一个中央机构负责处理材料并传播其理念，可以通过新闻服务或印刷期

27 Cyrillo Rudolpho Jarre and Ki Jen Li, trans., *Tentamen Sensum Codicis Iuris Canonici: Litteris Sinicis Reddendi Privatim Susceptum et Peractum*, 327–33.

28 *Primum Concilium Sinense*, 305-9.

29 “DECRET d’Institution de la Commission d’experts, ou du Comité pour les Écoles, les Livres, les Journaux. (Concile Plénier Chin. L.I, T.XI, C.1.)”, *Le Petit Messager de Ning-po*, June 1928.

30 James Edward Walsh, “The Catholic Central Bureau of China”.

31 Löwenthal et al., *The Religious Periodical Press in China*, 57.

刊的形式将信息传播到农村地区。³²

在创办的第一年，这家新闻社每周分发超过250条新闻，供50家中国天主教期刊和21家国外期刊使用。³³到了1940年，新闻通讯社的内容大约有275条。中文版约有8至10页，英法文版则有12页。这些发布内容被送往约50家中国天主教报纸和期刊，24家天主教、及7家非天主教外语期刊，19家海外报纸和期刊，以及7家新闻社。来自中国传教区的天主教新闻通常占每期内容的一半或更多，其余部分则为来自世界其他地方的天主教新闻。³⁴同年在上海创办的英文周报《公教杂志》（*Catholic Review*）专门设有一个栏目“天主教视野（The Catholic Horizon）”，旨在吸引读者关注国内其他地区的传教事件。³⁵

另一份使用宠光通讯社服务的天主教报纸是位于济南和武昌的《光华报》。该报创办人，加拿大方济各会神父文振华（Bonaventure Pélouquin O.F.M.）对其反馈道：“就《光华报》而言，这项服务无价的帮助使我们能够减少一名翻译员的工作，目前也使我们能够尝试加印我们每周的报纸，没有宠光通讯社的帮助，这几乎是不可能的”。³⁶

文振华神父是天主教报刊的坚定支持者。除了上述报纸外，他还在济南创办了《神职月刊》（*Apostolicum*），这是一本中文和拉丁文的双语月刊，专门面向神职人员。1935年，他作为天主教报刊的代表之一，参加了在上海召开的中华公教进行会全国教区代表大会，并在分组讨论的“新闻会议”中发表了讲话。此次大会本身就是天主教愈加重视参与社会的一个标志，而专门的新闻会议则进一步推动了出版事业的合作。

3. 1935年中华公教进行会全国教区代表大会

3.1. 文振华的提议

1935年9月8日至15日，第一次全中华公教进行大会在上海正修中学礼堂举行。首届教务会议召开十年后的中国形势逐渐稳定，1928年南京国民政府宣布中国统一，结束了从1916年到1928年的军阀混战时期。国家进入了建设和发展的阶段，而天主教会也表达了愿意参与的态度。

³² Löwenthal et al., *ibid.*, 293–94.

³³ 中华公教进行会总监督处，《本年内公教新闻杂志事业之新进展》，第1页。

³⁴ Löwenthal et al., *The Religious Periodical Press in China*, 31.

³⁵ Jean Armstrong, “Editorial”, *The Catholic Review*, September 5th 1935, 3.

³⁶ Bonaventure Pélouquin, “La Presse Catholique en Chine”, 540.

“公教进行 (Catholic Action)”这一概念本质上是为了促进教会平信徒的参与，推动“天主教平信徒全体对社会的整体行动”。³⁷大会的与会人数约300至400人，涵盖了全国各个社会层面，包括教会上级，例如第二任驻华教廷公使蔡宁 (Mario Zanin, 1890-1958) 总主教，以及平信徒代表，涵盖男性、女性、青年和知识分子等群体。大会通过实时媒体报道，使天主教会获得了一定程度的宣传，达到了展示其关注中国社会及道德福祉的目标。

大会伊始便向国民政府表示合作共同推进国家复兴的意愿，国民政府官员们也表示支持，其中包括上海市市长吴铁城、国民政府主席林森、财政部长孔祥熙等，他们认同政府与教会的协作。这一举措也希望政府在态度上对宗教持更为宽容的立场。³⁸

由于“公教进行”本身具有强烈的社会和公共性质，天主教出版物受到了特别关注。在大会期间，由中华公教进行会总监督处组织了“中华公教定期刊物展览会”，并设计了特刊，旨在一方面展示已取得的进展，另一方面吸引更多的订阅者。³⁹9月11日下午，举行了新闻会议，约20名长期从事出版工作的人士参加了会议，许多人之前只是互相闻名而未曾谋面。会议的发言人包括：来自教务委员会的戴日辉 (Frederick Dietz)、《圣教杂志》(1911年上海创刊)的徐宗泽、《我们的教区》(1935年广东创刊)的蔡任渔、《益世报》(1915年天津创刊)的刘豁轩以及文振华等。

在名为《公教化刊物讨论》的演讲中，文振华首先引用了1924年大会文件中的第807、811和814号法令，阐明了最大程度推广报刊的必要性。为了充分利用这些活动，他提出了一个实践方案，在不增加开支的情况下提高报纸的发行量。在他看来，当前的任务不是盲目增加新的出版机构，而是通过增加订阅数量来扩大影响力。

他提出了一种节省成本的方式，通过复刻成功的报纸形式到不同的传教区，以扩大天主教报纸的覆盖范围。具体做法是为各地报纸提供统一的通用内容，各教区可以根据需要增加少量本地新闻和公告。⁴⁰这一创新方案意味着还没有天主教报纸的地区可以依托现有资源，借此更好地沟通天主教信息。

文振华通过将《光华报》从济南扩展至武昌，测试了他的提案。这

37 Frederick C. Dietz, “Significance of the Catholic Action Congress”, 673.

38 Frederick C. Dietz, *ibid*, 672-76.

39 中华公教进行会总监督处，《本年内公教新闻杂志事业之新进展》，第1页。

40 Löwenthal et al., *The Religious Periodical Press in China*, 57.

一过程得到了来自不同国籍和修会的主教的支持，展示了各方对其计划及预期效果的共同认同。

3.2. 《光华报》

1929年到达山东后，文振华于1933年创办了《光华报》。在湖南和湖北的主教们委托下，他于1935年从华北调至华南。⁴¹鉴于这两个省份缺乏宗教报纸，十四位主教决定启动这一计划。为了避免中断济南版《光华报》的出版，文振华精确地采取了将济南版的核心内容复制到武昌版的方法，从而增加整体订阅数量。到会议召开时，他设想在重庆再开办一版，以将报纸进一步推进到中国西南地区。⁴²

为了在武昌推出新版本，湖南和湖北的主教们一致同意在每个教区选定一位指定推广人。创办《光华报》的合作不仅是跨区域的，而且是跨国籍和跨修会的，因为十四位主教来自八个不同的国籍，并且隶属于四个不同的修会，根据《中华天主教年鉴》（*Les Missions de Chine*）（见表1）。⁴³这一资源共享和实施的实施战略性地拓宽了这份天主教出版物的地理覆盖范围。

湖北		
汉口	意大利方济各会 (Ordo Fr. Minorum)	希贤 (Eugène Massi)
汉阳	爱尔兰高隆邦会 (Societas Sancti Columbani)	高尔文 (Edward J. Galvin)
宜昌	比利时方济各会	顾学德 (Henri-Noël Gubbels)
圻口	意大利方济各会	佳格理 (Raphaël Cazzanelli)
老河口	意大利方济各会	费乐理 (Alphonse-Marie Ferrani)
武昌	美国方济各会	艾原道 (Joseph Espelage/ Sylvestre)

41 Claudia von Collani, “Die Mission in der Chinesischen Provinz Shandong im 20. Jahrhundert”, 345.

42 Bonaventure Pélouquin, “La Presse Catholique en Chine”

43 Lazaristes de Peit’ang, *Les Missions de Chine* (Treizième Année 1935–1936)

湖南		
长沙	意大利方济各会	石道琦 (Giacinoto-Gaudenzio Stan- chi)
常德	西班牙奥斯定会 (Ordo Eremitarum S. Augustini)	翟德隆 (Ange-Diego Carbajal)
衡阳	意大利方济各会	柏长青 (Raphaël Ange Palazzi)
澧州	西班牙奥斯定会	马国珍 (Hippolyte Martinez)
岳州	西班牙奥斯定会	高凤翔 (Ange de la Calle Fontecha)
沅陵	美国苦难会 (Congregatio Passionis)	欧克澜 (Cuthbert M. O’Gara, 加拿大籍)
永州	奥地利方济各会	德志恒 (Jean-Damascène Jesacher)

表1 1935年湖南、湖北地区教区和主教

《光华报》在武昌对社会做出了重要贡献，特别是在抗日战争期间。文振华主张天主教媒体应当关注社会事件并将其传递给读者，而不仅仅是报道宗教事务。光华报按照他的指导方针进行报道。1937年，该报更名为《益华报》，随着战争的临近，它形成了专注于报道与战争相关内容的编辑原则。学者们认为该报在抗日战争中帮助提升了民众士气；与此同时，广泛的战时记录对战争研究具有重要价值。⁴⁴

然而，由于资源匮乏和成本上升，《益华报》（前身为《光华报》）不得不在1938年停刊。尽管长期的战争影响了许多天主教出版物的发行，但并没有完全中断这一事业，并在战后得到恢复。1947年，由驻华宗座代表黎培理（Antonio Riberi, 1897–1967）主持的全国天主教出版会议第三次在上海召开，旨在汇聚全国出版界人士，推动出版事业的全面复苏。

44 王志敏，《〈益华报〉与中国天主教會的抗战救亡（1937-1938）》；“益华报”，全国报刊索引数据库

4. 1947年全国天主教出版会议

4.1. 过渡阶段

代表上智编译馆的方豪神父在参加大会后回忆道：“自1924年首届教务会议和1935年中华公教进行会全国教区代表大会以来，中国教会已经有十多年没有召开全国性会议了。对于所有关心中国教会事务的人来说，我们一直希望能够再次在大规模的传教运动中合作。”此时，天主教国际代表团的新闻处执行秘书师人杰神父（N. Maestrini P.I.M.E.）代表教廷驻华公使，召集了来自中国各地的天主教编辑代表。⁴⁵由于这是首次举行的此类会议，因此认为应当只讨论书籍问题，将期刊报刊的议题留待以后再议。⁴⁶

大会在战后的背景下召开，重点讨论了如何在二战后重振天主教出版业的紧迫需求。此次会议强调了天主教新闻的韧性和适应性。1947年5月16日至17日，新闻大会在位于上海197号祁齐路（即今岳阳路）新设的教务委员会办公楼举行。来自各天主教出版界的三十多名代表齐聚一堂，商讨复兴与发展策略（见表2）。首位中国枢机主教田耕莘致信表示支持，信中强调了天主教新闻更好组织的必要性，并鼓励所有代表保持大团结。⁴⁷会议的关键成果便是重建天主教出版人之间的合作与支持。

姓名	职位
Mgr. A. Riberi	Apostolic Internuncio to China 教廷驻华公使
Mgr. Paul Yu Pin 于斌	Archbishop of Nanjing 南京总主教

45 方豪，《出席全国天主教出版会议记略》，第268页。

46 “Catholic Activities (Catholic Press Convention)”, *The Catholic Review*, June 1947, 250.

47 “Minutes of the First General Meeting of Catholic Publishers Held in Shanghai on May 16th and 17th, 1947, in the Reception Hall of the Synodal Commission at Yoyang Road 197”, 60–74.

Rev. N. Maestrini, P.I.M.E.	Acting Secretary of the Press Section of the Synodal Commission 教务委员会出版组临时秘书 Representing the Catholic Truth Society of Hongkong and the Imprimerie de Nazareth 香港公教真理学会及香港纳匝肋印书 馆代表
Rev. Fr. A. Bernard S.J.	Representing the Shienhsien [Xian'xian] publications
萧濬华	河北献县天主堂印书馆代表
Rev. Fr. P. Bertino S.S.P.	Representing the Pious Society of St. Paul 南京圣保禄会代表
Rev. Fr. Cesbron-Laveau S.J.	Representing the T'ou-se-we [Tushan- wan] publications 上海土山湾印书馆代表
Mr. Zhang Tiansong (Chantisson) 张天松	Reporter for the Yishi Bao of Nanjing 南京益世报记者
Rev. Fr. Fang Hao (Maurus Fang)	Representing the St. Thomas Institute 上智编译馆代表
Rev. Fr. Heras S.J.	Representing the Anking [Anqing] Mission publications 安庆天主堂印书局代表
Rev. Fr. Koster S.V.D.	Representing the Fu Jen [Furen] publications 辅仁大学出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. F. Legrand C.I.C.M. 高乐康	Representing the Scheut publications 圣母圣心会（普爱堂）出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Niu Ruowang (J. Niu) 牛若望	Representing the Nanjing publications 南京教区出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Wu Zongwen (Charles Ou) C.M. 吴宗文	Representing the Lazarists publications 遣使会出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Peeters Hermes O.F.M.	Representing the Domus Franciscana publications 方济各会出版事业代表

Rev. Fr. Sigfried Schneider O.F.M.	Representing the Wuchang publication 武昌教区代表
Rev. Fr. P. Pomati S.D.B.	Representing the Salesian Press, Hong- kong and Macau 香港澳门慈幼会印书馆代表
Rev. Fr. Dong Shizhi (J. Tong) 董世祉	Representing the Nanjing publications 南京教区出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. M. Suppo S.D.B.	Representing the Salesian Press 慈幼会印书馆代表
Rev. Fr. Hu Chongsheng (Andreas Vu) S.D.B. 胡重生	Representing the Salesian Press 慈幼会出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Zhang Boda (Beda Tsang) S.J. 张伯达	Representing the Jesuit publications 耶稣会出版事业代表
Rev. Fr. Wang Rensheng (Louis Wang) S.J. 王仁生	Representing the Aurora University publications 震旦大学出版部代表
Rev. Fr. Wang Changzhi (Joseph Wang) S.J. 王昌祉	Representing the Jesuit publications 耶稣会出版事业代表
Mr. Yuan Chengpin (Joseph Yuan Zen Pin) 袁承斌	Secretary of the St. Thomas Institute 上智编译馆秘书
Dr. Ye Qiuyuan (Yeh Ch'iu-yuan Francis) 叶秋原	Representing the Catholic Truth Society of China 中国公教真理学会代表
荣誉顾问	
Rev. Fr. Dumas S.J. 茅若虚	Rector of the Aurora University 震旦大学校长
Rev. Fr. Kearney S.J. 甘雅各	Editor of The Catholic Review 《公教杂志》 (《天主教杂志》月刊)的主编
Rev. Fr. Patrick O'Connor 奥柯诺	N.C.W.C. Correspondent in China and former President of the American Catho- lic Press Association 美国公教新闻社驻中国特派员及前任 美国公教出版界联合会主席

表2 出席1947年全国天主教出版会议代表

与之前的两次大会相比，本次大会规模要小得多，因此得到的关注也相应较少。原因在于，首先参会人员仅限于天主教出版人，教会长上未被邀请，他们最终会通过通函了解会议的结果。其次，为了避免引起反教媒体的怀疑，主办方要求参会人员不要在报纸和杂志上大肆宣传此次会议。⁴⁸尽管如此，本次大会对天主教报刊依然具有重要意义。

此次大会是一个“过渡平台”，连接了战前与战后的阶段，为后续的天主教出版事业奠定了基础。会议共作出了约30项决定，分为四个部分：（1）作家培训，（2）书籍生产，（3）书籍流通，以及（4）中文天主教术语。与会者一致同意编纂一部天主教书籍总目录，在中国各大城市建立图书馆，调查适合翻译成中文的欧洲语言优秀文学作品，出版一部中文天主教词典，出版一本双语杂志，内容涵盖所有对天主教徒有兴趣的新书，并免费发放，出版一本“阅读指南”，对非天主教出版商出版的书籍进行分类等。⁴⁹这一套详细的指导方针由天主教教务协进会（1947-1951）——重组后的教务委员会付诸实践。尽管该组织昙花一现，但它促进全国性的天主教文化事业中发挥了重要作用。⁵⁰

4.2. 天主教教务协进会

在会议结束后不久，天津主教文贵斌（Jean de Vienne C.M.）对一个旨在促进出版事业的由不同领域的传教士组成的联盟表示支持，并提到教廷公使的以下意图：“他已于5月16日和17日主持了上海的全国天主教出版会议，并且据说他正在考虑重组教务委员会，并设立各个委员会”⁵¹。

天主教教务协进会是教务委员会（Synodal Commission of Schools, Books and Press）的继任者，正式成立于1947年12月23日，其大多数部门设立在位于岳阳路197号的住所里，这里曾举行过全国天主教出版会议。⁵²该组织出版了《中国传教士》（*China Missionary*），这是一本为国内外传教士编辑的月刊，主要由会议参与者之一的高乐康（François

48 “Minutes of the First General Meeting of Catholic Publishers”, 262.

49 “Catholic Activities (Catholic Press Convention)”, 250; “Minutes of the First General Meeting of Catholic Publishers”

50 Bibiana Yee-ying Wong, *The Short-Lived Catholic Central Bureau: National Catalyst for Cultural Apostolate in China (1947-1951)*

51 Jean de Vienne, “La Presse Catholique en Chine”

52 Bibiana Yee-ying Wong, *The Short-Lived Catholic Central Bureau*, 56.

Legrand) 主编。⁵³《中国传教士》记录的多个天主教出版项目参考了全国天主教出版会议中设定的方向。

4.2.1. 编制可用天主教书籍总目

改组前的教务委员会在《全国天主教出版会议第一次大会会议纪要》后，附上三种语言寻求出版人的协助，用以编制一份面向公众的书籍清单。每一条条目都要求注明其主题、类别、风格、品质以及目标读者群体：不同教育水平的青年或成年人；城市或乡村居民；老派或新派文人等。⁵⁴

次年，《中国传教史》在陆达源修生的帮助下，编制了一份全面的《面向公众的书籍》清单。该清单包含了大学生、高中生、初中生、拥有小学高年级教育的成年人、拥有中等教育的成年人以及传统教育成年人等子项。所有列出的书籍都可以通过天主教真理学会（Catholic Truth Society）、辅仁大学书店（Fujen University Bookshop）和天主教会书店（Librairie de la Mission Catholique）等渠道订购。⁵⁵

4.2.2. 调查适合翻译成中文的欧洲文学作品

基于会议中关于翻译书籍的决定，高乐康向《中国传教士》的读者征求有关适合翻译成中文的书籍的信息。最初从法语开始，他计划通过更广泛的合作，未来能够准备其他语言（如英语、德语和意大利语）的书单。⁵⁶

为了帮助选择书籍，包括那些需要翻译的书籍，《待出版书目：新书、翻译书籍和再版书籍》中的清单有助于出版人能够了解哪些书籍已经在筹备中。该书单由香港天主教真理学会编制。⁵⁷1949年，在布吕克尔（Xavier Bürkler S.M.B.）神父的帮助下，依据收到的信息分类，编制了待翻译的英文书籍清单。编辑认识到这只是第一步，因此继续请求读者提供补充信息以完善该清单。⁵⁸

⁵³ François Legrand, "Introduction"

⁵⁴ "The Propagation of the Faith Through Books. An Appeal for Cooperation"

⁵⁵ "Notes and Information (Books for Non-Christians)"; "Books for Non-Christians"

⁵⁶ François Legrand, "Livres à Traduire en Chinois"

⁵⁷ "List of Works in Preparation: New Books, Translations and Re-Editions"

⁵⁸ "Notes and Information (English Books to be Translated into Chinese)", 679.

4.2.3. 出版一本对非天主教书籍进行分类的“阅读指南”

这一目标在1949年部分实现，得益于毕保郊神父（Octave Brière S.J.）的工作，他在《震旦杂志》（*Bulletin de l'Université l'Aurore*）上发表了对过去十年内出现的主要中文书籍的评述。在《震旦杂志》的许可下，《中国传教士》能够以英文在三部分中刊载这篇评述，分别涉及哲学、社会学和文学。⁵⁹尽管这还不是一本指南，但它为读者提供了现代中国思想的趋势，并做出了相应的评论。

4.2.4. 在中国每个大城市建立图书馆

在《通过书籍进行传播》一文中，《中国传教士》提醒读者关注会议中的决议，并完整转载了关于图书流通的部分内容，呼吁更加努力地实现这些目标。编辑进一步勾画了以下内容：“在中国所有的大城市，我们应该至少拥有一家大型书店，并配有阅览室，位置应选在人流最繁忙的区域。我们还应该为公众和学生分别设立阅览图书馆。此外，每所学校和医院也应有自己的图书馆。”关于推荐书籍，读者可以参考前述的栏目“面向公众的书籍”。⁶⁰

4.2.5. 出版中文天主教术语词典

天主教教务协进会从一开始便计划设立一个“天主教术语统一组”，然而其工作直到1949年秋季才刚刚开始。⁶¹尽管在《中国传教士》上很少能看到此方面的进展，但从事出版的天主教徒仍持续关注此项工作。

1949年9月，术语组的陈哲敏神父开始编纂一本中文天主教术语词典，目的是为了更有效地促进教内外作家与读者之间的沟通。预计该词典将于1951年底出版。然而随着天主教教务协进会于1951年6月关闭，手稿已不存。⁶²1961年，《天主教教义词汇》，一本中英对照的词汇词典，在台中出版。它最初是《天主教教义的考察》三卷本的附录，该书由耶稣会作家及编辑王昌祉编写，他也是出版会议的参与者。该书汇集了与天主教教义密切相关的天主教及其他术语，旨在为外籍传教士寻找对应词汇，并为中国天主教徒阅读英文书籍或进行语言翻译提供帮助。⁶³

59 “Book Review: New Chinese Books 1940–1949”

60 “Apostolate Through Books”

61 Bibiana Yee-ying Wong, *The Short-Lived Catholic Central Bureau*, 56.

62 *ibid.*, 122-23.

63 王昌祉，《天主教教义词汇》，序

这些由中央组织主导的工作重新激活了战后天主教出版事业。由于1949年政治局势的突然变化，许多计划在尚未开始之前就被中断，如同中文天主教术语词典的项目一样。这一时期标志着二十世纪前半叶天主教出版的短暂繁荣的结束。

5. 结论

由三次上海大会促成的合作机制在二十世纪上半叶天主教出版事业的发展中起到了重要作用，其遗产至今仍惠及历史研究。

对于中国的天主教传教事业来说，存在着理论上统一的教会与由不同修会或国籍所造成的实际分裂之间的张力。由于出版事业及相关活动，包括写作、流通和翻译过于庞大，无法仅由单一团体承担。如果仅由某一地区负责，通常会交由几个人执行，且会局限于本地和短期时间范围内。为了在动荡时期得以维持，出版事业需要有一个具有普遍性质的中央组织，能够协调工作以实现互助和提高效率。

实现这种协作本身是困难的，因为它并非自然而然地发展起来的。因此建立超修会、超区域和超国界的组织来管理教会，成为了三次大会共同目标。1924年，首届教务会议不仅为团结精神做出了指引，还通过制定共同的方针和教务委员会实现了这一精神。教务委员会促使更多地区开始了期刊的出版，并设立了如宠光通讯社等支持。为了更好地贯彻大会的原则，来自中国各地的天主教记者于1935年在中华公教进行会全国教区代表大会上，讨论了实际的行动方案。文振华提出的建议和实践的《光华报》证明了合作的效果和影响。战后的1947年，全国天主教出版会议为因战乱而中断的出版事业提供了一个过渡阶段，重新将出版事业的力量为了共同目标联合起来。继教务委员会之后，天主教教务协进会领导了战后出版活动的恢复。

此外，对天主教传教事业在文化活动投入上相较于新教传教事业的较少印象做一简略回应：天主教出版事业的历史轨迹表明，尽管成果不如新教显著，但天主教会始终在文化领域努力，并加深了与中国社会的互动。由两位宗座代表和教廷公使分别主持的三次上海大会，展示了教会当局到一线实践者对出版的重视、甚至是优先度。在通过出版尽力缩小教会内部不同群体之间的差距的同时，它也有意通过与社会的互动以及更广泛的读者的接触，来消除与其他群体的隔阂。

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Commissio Synodalis in Sinis: History and Role in Catholic Education under Celso Costantini (1928-1933)

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Abstract

This paper examines the vital role played by the Synodal Commission on Schools, Books, and Press in facilitating and supporting Catholic missions in China. As the longest-lived among the three commissions established by the *Primum Concilium Sinense* (First Chinese Council) a century ago, the five-member body based in Peiping (today's Beijing) provided indispensable aid to the Apostolic Delegate in breaking the French domination of mission affairs and in fostering cross-congregational collaboration. Using primary sources from the Vatican archives and other relevant repositories, this study aims to investigate the understudied history of the Synodal Commission, its staff members, major tasks on promoting Catholic education and publication, and notably, the challenges it encountered. The focus is on its initial phase under the leadership of the first Apostolic Delegate, Celso Costantini. The paper also examines his interactions with the Chinese government and the significant role of lay Catholics in supporting the Synodal Commission's efforts to provide education for the Chinese population.

Keyword: Catholic education, First Chinese Council,
French Protectorate, religious freedom, church-state relations

For the first time in the history of Catholic Christianity in modern China, a national and cross-congregational organization called *Commissio Synodalis in Sinis* (Synodal Commission in China 公教教育聯合會) was set up in accordance with the resolution of *Primum Concilium Sinense* (First Chinese Council 中華全國主教公會會議) in 1924, which we commemorate its centenary. Its existence from 1928 to 1946 paralleled with the period in which the Chinese Nationalist Government was solidifying its prestige and asserting dominion over a unified nation, only to be followed by the rise of Japanese aggression against China. Amidst the nationalist fervor, the control over educational institutions emerged as a contentious battleground that Chinese authorities sought to reclaim from Christian mission bodies. Against this backdrop, the paper presents a historical sketch of the Synodal Commission and its role in developing Catholic education under the leadership of the first Apostolic Delegate to China, Archbishop Celso Costantini 剛恆毅 (1876-1958, tenure 1922-1933).

Primary sources used by this study include: (1) An unpublished memorandum in Latin by German Father Theodore Mittler 苗德秀 SVD (1887-1956), secretary and administrator of the Synodal Commission, type-written at the end of his six-year service in 1934; (2) An article in English by American Bishop James E. Walsh 華理柱 MM (1891-1981), General Secretary of the Catholic Central Bureau 中國天主教教務協進委員會 (the successor of the Synodal Commission), published in 1949; (3) A few reports of Archbishop Costantini to the Holy See on the educational and political situations in China. They are supplemented by additional documents from the Vatican archives, as well as some frequently-used sources, such as Costantini's memoir *Con i missionari in Cina*, and articles from Catholic periodicals.

I. Loose sand and strong wind

Christian missionary activities flourished in a relatively peaceful environment with fewer persecutions and unrestrained freedom in the two decades following the devastating Boxer Uprising of 1899-1901. During the decline of the Qing Empire and the tumultuous era of warlords in early Republican China, the number of Catholic Christians doubled, reaching approximately two million by 1920 in a total population of 350 to 400 million.² However, it was reported that a large proportion of baptisms were given to infants near death in

2 穆啟蒙 (Joseph Motte) 編著, 侯景文譯, 《中國天主教史》(台北: 光啟文化, 2004, 五版), 頁126。

orphanages.³ Even after the fall of the imperial empire, the protection afforded by Qing-French treaties since the mid-19th century persisted. The Catholic Church continued to expand across China, particularly in rural regions, thanks to the arrival of thousands of missionary priests and sisters. They played a crucial role in establishing educational and charitable institutions in various parts of the country.

Under the Holy See's traditional system, the extensive mission fields of China were distributed among different religious orders and mission societies. Vicars or prefects apostolic, as mission heads, reported directly to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide) but often operated independently. Their protective nature hindered collaboration and the promotion of native priestly vocations, a key issue addressed in Pope Benedict XV's apostolic letter, *Maximum illud* (1919). Similarly, the missions lacked coordination in their educational endeavor, which has been traditionally integral to missionary work.

Since the late 19th century, schools established alongside churches gradually evolved into catechetical schools (*jingtang* 經堂) that offered religious instruction, and basic primary education with Western curricula and separate facilities for boys and girls. Mission schools for girls, typically administered by religious sisters, broke the tradition of excluding females from formal education and empowered Chinese women. The founding of the Republic of China and the introduction of a modern school system in 1912 presented opportunities for mission schools, which had been less attractive to non-Christian children due to their deviation from the imperial educational system, to address shortages of public schools, funding, and teachers. However, they faced serious challenges from the new socio-political environment, especially as calls for national sovereignty in education led to sweeping reforms by the Nationalist government after China's reunification.⁴

"The great freedom and perfect autonomy of the past are over," Archbishop Costantini wrote in a report to Propaganda Fide in Rome, "Unfortunately, the new times hit us hard, because our private schools, in general, did not cor-

3 A Protestant survey reported that about 250,000 people in nine Chinese provinces were baptized as Catholics in one year (1919), among whom 117,701 were dying infants. As there were fewer than 100,000 adults in any given year, it cast doubt on "the voltage of real evangelism" within the Catholic Church in China. Milton T. Stauffer (ed.), *The Christian Occupation of China* (Shanghai: China Continuation Committee, 1922), 461.

4 Jean-Paul Wiest, "Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools and China's Drive toward a Modern Educational System (1850-1950)," *Extrême-Occident*, 33 (2011), 92-95; 黎正甫, 《天主教教育史》(台中: 光啟, 1960), 頁360-361。

respond to the needs of government programs.” While the Protestants had formed a cross-denominational body, the Christian Educational Association of China 中華基督教教育會, for the coordination of mission schools and textbook publishing as early as 1890, Catholic schools remained like loose sand in the face of the strong wind. Therefore, Costantini insisted that “we must unite our efforts to try to save what is possible, especially in the field of schools.”⁵

II. Outcomes of the Shanghai Council

Sent by Pope Pius XI (pontificate 1922-1939) to implement the goal of *Maximum illud*,⁶ Archbishop Costantini’s first and foremost task was to convoke a plenary assembly of all mission heads in China. The *Primum Concilium Sinense* was held in Shanghai from May 15 to June 12, 1924. Discreetly and fortunately enough, the meetings took place without encountering any objections from France. A total of 108 clergymen participated, including secretaries and assistants. Voting delegates comprised 42 vicars apostolic, five prefects apostolic, and one apostolic administrator. Almost all were European and American, except for two Chinese prefects apostolic nominated by Costantini shortly before the Council. A Trappist abbot and 24 superiors of religious men’s congregations (all non-Chinese) attended as observers.⁷

One of the Council Fathers, Bishop James E. Walsh MM, Prefect Apostolic of Jiangmen (Guangdong province) and superior of the Maryknoll Mission in China, reflected that the Council’s whole effort was “to coordinate and unify the work of the missions for the sake of mutual assistance and greater fruitfulness.”⁸ Its resolutions, titled *Acta-Decreta et Normae-Vota, etc.* (hereafter *Acta-Decreta*), consisted of 861 clauses concerning clergy, Catholic laity,

5 Letter from Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, “Commissione Sinodale per le scuole, la gioventù e la stampa,” March 9, 1928, the Propaganda Fide Historical Archives (hereafter referred to as APF), Nova Serie (hereafter referred to as N.S.) vol. 899, 165.

6 The epoch-making apostolic letter delineated the guiding principles and focal points of Catholic missions, marking a departure from Eurocentric and colonialist ideologies. It advocated for respecting cultural diversity, keeping missionary activities separate from political affiliations, and nurturing local churches to ensure self-sufficiency when missionaries transition out, promoting the rise of indigenous clergy and episcopacy.

7 The two Chinese prefects were Odorico Cheng Hede 成和德 OFM (1873-1928) and Melchior Sun Dezheng 孫德禎 CM (1869-1951). A total of 61 vicars and prefects apostolic had been invited, but 11 vicars asked for leave due to old age or sickness, and sent their representatives to Shanghai. 〈列席公會議之主教暨監牧姓氏〉, 《聖教雜誌》, 卷13期7 (1924.7), 頁22-24; See also Anthony Sui-ki Lam, “Archbishop Costantini and The First Plenary Council of Shanghai (1924),” *Tripod*, vol. 28, no. 148 (Spring 2008).

8 James E. Walsh, “The Catholic Central Bureau of China,” *China Missionary*, vol. 2, no. 6 (June 1949), 611.

sacraments, liturgy, missionary work, and its methods in light of the newly published Code of Canon Law of 1917 and the actual situations in the extensive missionary field of China. The Propaganda Fide gave its approval in 1928.

2.1 On education

Titulus VII, Book IV of the *Acta-Decreta*, with its 59 clauses across seven chapters, addressed Catholic colleges and schools. It covered the objectives and spirit of Catholic education, the educational landscape in China, and the roles of bishops, missionaries, students, parents, teachers, curriculum, and financial management.⁹ It highlighted the vital role of Catholic schools in both educating Chinese Catholics and enhancing the Church's standing with non-believers.¹⁰ Despite suffering fewer assaults and disturbances compared to Protestant schools under the Anti-Christian Movement since 1922,¹¹ the Council Fathers warned that during this period of national renewal and new educational order Catholic schools held "even greater importance and significance," and that every effort must be made to spread Christian faith.¹²

The *Acta-Decreta* cited the canonical prohibition against Catholic children attending non-Catholic schools and warned about the rise of materialism in public schools, which undermined traditional values. It also noted the anti-Catholic and rationalistic atmosphere often found in Protestant schools.¹³ Therefore, it stressed the importance of offering Catholic doctrine as an elective course to non-Christian students, and providing deeper religious education to Catholic students under the guidance of bishops.¹⁴

9 Previous studies covering the *Primum Concilium Sinense* and Catholic education include: 黎正甫, 《天主教教育史》, 頁365-367; 林瑞琪, 〈民初天主教學校的宗教傳播與反宗教傳播〉, 《鼎》, 卷26期142, 頁21-23。

10 N. 748, Caput I, Titulus VII, Liber IV, *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924: Acta-Decreta et Normae-Vota, etc.* (Zi-Ka-Wei, Shanghai: Typographia Missions Catholicae, 1929), 231.

11 Historians generally agree that Catholic institutions faced less disruption than Protestant ones during the May Fourth Movement (1919) and the subsequent Anti-Christian Movement (1922-1927). These movements targeted private schools run by Western missionaries, accusing them of undermining national identity and advocated for increased government supervision. Wiest, "Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools and China's Drive toward a Modern Educational System (1850-1950)," 97.

12 N. 749, Caput I, Titulus VII, Liber IV, *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*, 232.

13 NN. 753 and 756, Caput I, Titulus VII, Liber IV, *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*, 233.

14 N. 761, Caput I, Titulus VII, Liber IV, *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*, 234.

2.2 On Synodal Commissions

Walsh recalled that, beyond drawing up specific laws for Catholic missions in China, the Council Fathers “wished to go further.” To benefit all missions, the Council Fathers agreed to create three Synodal Commissions to address questions that were national and general in scope.¹⁵ Sharing a common name, *Peritorum Commissione seu Comitatu* (Commissions or Committee of Experts), they were aimed to foster continuous cooperation beyond the boundaries of mission territories in the following specific tasks: (1) For schools, books, and journals; (2) for the Chinese version of the Holy Scriptures; and (3) for a uniform text of Catechism and prayers.

The second commission failed due to difficulties finding translators skilled in both biblical languages and modern colloquial Chinese 白話文.¹⁶ It was not until the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War that Italian Father Gabriele M. Allegra 雷永明 OFM (1907-1976) and his team of Chinese Franciscan friars were entrusted with the project. The third commission, led by German Bishop Augustin Henninghaus 韓寧鎬 SVD (1862-1939), Vicar Apostolic of Yanzhou (Shandong province), completed a new Chinese Catechism (*Yaoli wenda* 要理問答) with 377 questions and answers from 1929 to 1933, and was then dissolved.¹⁷ It was widely adopted all over China within a couple of years. Bishops could modify and translate it into local dialects, provided that their versions maintained consistency in structure and content to achieve “substantial uniformity.”¹⁸

15 Walsh, “The Catholic Central Bureau of China,” 611

16 Letter from G. de Jonghe to Fr. Guimbretiere (Istituto Biblico Pontificio, Jerusalem), September 20, 1930, the Vatican Apostolic Archive (hereafter referred to as AAV), Archivio della Nunziatura Apostolica in Cina (Arch. Nunz. Cina), b. 85, 211; Celso Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933): Memorie de fatti e di idee*, vol. II (Rome: Via di Propaganda, 1947), 5.

17 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. II, 5; 費希爾(Hermann Fischer)著, 雷立柏 (Leopold Leeb) 譯, 《奧古斯定·韓寧鎬主教傳》(台北: 聖家獻女傳教修會, 2006), 頁312-313。

18 Henry Valtorta, introduction to *Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (Hong Kong: Catholic Truth Society, 1952, 8th ed.), IV; Letter from Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, “Chiede sussidio per le spese della Commissione Catechistica,” February 15, 1929, APF, N.S. vol. 1000, 728-729.

III. Synodal Commission on Schools, Books, and Press

3.1 Commission members

The principal and and longest lasting commission, on which this paper focuses, was *Commissione pro scholis, libris et diariis*. In his report to the Propaganda Fide, Archbishop Costantini admitted that “the establishment of this Commission cost me some effort, because each religious family loves to do it on its own.”¹⁹ He nominated five priests from different congregations as standing members for a term of three years: the Society of Jesus, the Congregation of the Mission, the Oblates of St. Benedict, the Society of Paris Foreign Missions, and the Society of the Divine Word. They hailed from diverse nationalities: a French, a Chinese, a Belgian, a German, and an American.²⁰ His intention was likely two-fold: to foster cross-congregational cooperation, and to dilute the strong influence of French missionaries and their government within the Catholic missions in China.

Table 1. The first group of Synodal Commission members (1928-1933)

Auguste Bernard 裴伯納 (1889-1962)	SJ	French	President ; Rector of Institut des Hautes Études et Commerciales, Tianjin
Philip Wu Dehui 吳德輝 (1893-?)	CM	Chinese	Vice-president and national director of Catholic Action ; from Baoding, and served at the North Church of Peiping
Georges de Jonghe d’Ardoye 雍守正 (1887-1961)	MEP	Belgian	Secretary and Administrator ; from the Vicariate of Chengdu; Inspector of Schools (1932-1933)
George Barry O’Toole 奧圖爾 (1886-1944)	OSB ²¹	American	Rector of Fu Jen Catholic University, Peiping
Theodore Mittler 苗德秀 (1887-1956)	SVD	German	Moderator of the <i>Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis</i>

Source: The Propaganda Fide Historical Archives and *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*.²²

Table created by the author. Bold text indicates their roles within the Synodal Commission.

¹⁹ Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, “Commissione Sinodale per le scuole, la gioventu e la stampa.”

²⁰ “Decretum Institutionis Commissionis,” *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, vol. 1, no. 1 (May 1928), 2.

²¹ Father O’Toole was a secular priest and a member of the Oblates of St. Benedict (Third Order Benedictine). The abbreviation for the Oblates is also OSB, the same as the Order of St. Benedict.

²² Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, “Commissione Sinodale per le scuole, la gioventu e la stampa”; “Membra Commissionis Synodalis,” *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, vol. 2, no. 1 (January 1929), n.p.

Picture 1. The first members of the Synodal Commission (1929)

From left to right: G. de Jonghe, T. Mittler, G. O'Toole, P. Wu, A. Bernard.



Source: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, vol. 2, no. 1 (January 1929), n.p.

From the choice of the first members, we can tell that most of them had expertise in education matters. Besides the two university rectors, Father Georges de Jonghe d'Ardoye founded an educational complex called College of Sapientia in Qionglai county 邛崃上智學校, Sichuan province, from 1919 to 1923, which included a higher primary school, a secondary school, and a Catholic normal school;²³ Father Mittler taught in a school and a minor seminary in southern Shandong province before joining the Synodal Commission.²⁴

In practice, the Synodal Commission faced persistent staffing challenges. Mittler noted that from the context and the numerous weighty tasks assigned to the Commission, it is evident that the Shanghai Council requires five Commissioners to be actively engaged. However, from the day of its foundation until the arrival of Father Frederick C. Dietz 戴日輝 MM (1892-1968) at the end of August 1932,²⁵ there were only three active Commissioners.²⁶ Father Bernard,

23 "Georges de Jonghe d'Ardoye," Institut de recherche France-Asie, <https://irfa.paris/missionnaire/3068-de-jonghe-dardoye-georges/> (accessed 2 January 2024).

24 Leopold Leeb (ed.), "Biographies of SVD's in China (1879-1955)" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 94.

25 American Maryknoll Father Dietz was assigned to the Vicariate of Jiangmen (Guangdong province) in 1920, and became the Society Superior of the mission in 1930. He was named to the Synodal Commission in 1932, and succeeded Father Mittler as the director of publishing work. In 1935, he founded a Catholic news agency called *Agenzia Lumen*. His confrere Father William A. Kaschmitter MM (1899-1986) succeeded him to take charge of the news service in 1937, when he was assigned to Rome as the procurator general of the Maryknoll Mission, a post he occupied for ten years. Bibiana Yee-ying Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau: National Catalyst for Cultural Apostolate in China (1947-1951)* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute, 2021), 36.

26 Theodore Mittler to Mario Zanin, "Pro Memoria: Materiae Quod Commissionem Synodalem Ejusque Opera Considerandae, Discutiendae, Mutandae, Repormandae" (21 June 1934), 2, AAV, Arch.

the first president, and Father O'Toole resided offsite and attended only the plenary sessions, while Fathers Wu (replaced by Father Venanzio Chao Huaixin 趙懷信 [?-1949] after he was recalled by his Lazarist superiors in September 1931),²⁷ de Jonghe, and Mittler handled daily duties. The Commission lacked a president from September 1931 to November 1932 until Mittler was elected the second president. In May 1933, Father Dietz became the second secretary and administrator. The vice-president role was vacant after Father Chao's departure in December 1933.²⁸

Picture 2. The second members of the Synodal Commission (1932)

From left to right: Alphonse Hubrecht CM., V. Chao, T. Mittler, G. de Jonghe, F. Dietz.



Source: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, vol. 5, no. 12 (December 1932), n.p.

Although two new members were appointed to the Commission in that year—Belgian Father Joseph Rutten 呂登岸 CISM (1874-1950)²⁹ and Chinese Father Paul Yu Pin 于斌 (1901-1978)—the situation was “indeed worse than before in every aspect,” because new tasks were added to the Commission at the same time.³⁰ For instance, Father Rutten supervised missionary medical work, including disease prevention, hygiene improvement, and healthcare

Nunz. Cina, b. 85, 306.

27 Father Venanzio Chao was a younger brother of Bishop Philip Chao of Xuanhua. He graduated from the seminary of Peiping, and became the bishop's secretary and the rector of Xuanhua's minor seminary. In 1932, he taught in the major seminary, and joined the Synodal Commission as its vice-president and director general of Catholic Action. Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, 38.

28 Mittler, “Pro Memoria” 21.

29 Father Rutten served as a pastor and educator in Siwantze (Xiwanzi), located in Chahar province, from 1905 until he was elected as the Scheut Mission (CISM)'s superior general in 1920. Upon his return to China, he established a microbiology laboratory at Fu Jen University in 1931 for the development of a Chinese vaccine against epidemic typhus, which had claimed the lives of approximately seventy mostly young CISM missionaries in the previous twenty years. Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, 37.

30 Mittler, “Pro Memoria,” 2.

organization within Catholic missions.³¹ Father Yu, from Heilongjiang province, a Chinese philosophy and literature professor at the Pontifical Urban College in Rome, was recommended by Archbishop Costantini to direct Catholic Action in China.³²

Regarding the two most senior members, Father de Jonghe, the Commission's secretary and administrator, also served as Director of the Catholic Youth Association and Inspector of Catholic Schools until he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Yunnan in June 1933; Father Mittler, the Commission's president and moderator of the *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, was finally dismissed by the new Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Mario Zanin 蔡寧 (1890–1958, served 1934–1946), in May 1934 after making several requests. In his memorandum, he recommended that Archbishop Zanin invite two more priests to join the Commission: one responsible for schools and education and another dedicated to translations. He recommended that both Commissioners be Chinese.³³

In August 1934, Father John Niu Yiwei 牛亦未 (alias Ruowang 若望, 1897–1976) of Zhengding (Hebei province) assisted Father Yu to promote Catholic Action³⁴ and publish five Chinese periodicals under the banner of the lay movement, including the *Schola Catholica* 公教學校, which replaced the *Analecta Educationis* 教育益聞錄, Chinese monthly bulletin of the Synodal Commission, in 1935.³⁵ After Yu was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Nanjing in 1936, Niu took his place and remained the only Chinese Commissioner, until Father Paul Chow 周連墀 joined him as the secretary of the Pontifical Missionary Works in 1940.³⁶

31 Patrick M. W. Taveirne, "Father Joseph Rutten, CICM, 1874-1950: A Practical Missionary," manuscript of a lecture on the 13th International Verbiest Conference on Religion and the Rule of Law and the History of the Catholic Church in China, 21-24 August 2018, Leuven, 8-9.

32 Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, 38.

33 Mittler, "Pro Memoria," 3.

34 Father Niu's initial post in the Synodal Commission was secretary general of the Office of Director General of Catholic Action of China. 中華公教進行會總監督處編, 〈中華公教進行會演進史略〉, 《中華全國公教進行會統計冊1936-1937》(北平: 中華公教進行會總監督處, 1937?), 頁8。

35 Catholic Action, before the Second Vatican Council, is a generic term referring to "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy," which became a widespread movement of multiple types of lay organization under the promotion of Pope Pius XI (pontificate 1922-1939). He endeavored to organize the laity to infuse the temporal society with Gospel values, first in Italy and then throughout the universal church. Bibiana Yee-ying Wong, "Catholic Lay Apostolate in Twentieth-century China: From Catholic Action to the Legion of Mary," *Tripod*, 200 (Spring 2022), 108-109.

36 Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, 38-39; *Les Missions de Chine: Seizième Année (1940-1941)* (Peking: Lazaristes du Pétang, 1942), 1.

Table 2. Members of the Synodal Commission circa 1937-1939

René Flament 雷孟諾 (1862-?)	CM	French	President
Joseph Rutten 呂登岸 (1874-1950)	CICM	Belgian	Inspector of Seminaries and of Medical Works
Edouard Boedefeld 白德風 (?-1945)	OFM	German	Moderator of the <i>Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis</i>
William A. Kaschmitter 梅博文 (1899-1986)	MM	American	Secretary and Administrator; Director of Press Service and of <i>Agenzia Lumen</i>
John Niu Yiwei 牛亦未 (1897-1976)		Chinese	Director-general of Catholic Action

Source: Les Missions de Chine: Quinzième Année (1938-1939) (Peking: Lazaristes du Pétang, 1940), 1. Table created by the author.

3.2 Major tasks

The Commission's Latin name indicated its two major functions—for schools, book and press, but the Chinese name given by the first vice-president, Father Philip Wu, merely revealed its principal duty to support Catholic schools and promote Catholic education: 公教教育聯合會, which is literally “Catholic Education Union.” Regarding the disharmony of the two names, Father Mittler admitted the fact that “the Latin name errs by excess, while the Chinese name errs by deficiency.”³⁷ In fact, even within the scope of education, the Commission fell short of fulfilling every task assigned by the Shanghai Council.

The Synodal Commission's eight tasks were as follows:

- (1) To propose matters related to the religious, moral, literary, and scientific education of youth of both sexes in schools;
- (2) To accurately suggest and prepare texts or books suitable for use in schools;

³⁷ Mittler, “Pro Memoria,” 2.

- (3) To promote coordination among schools so that they may mutually assist one another;
- (4) To produce a bulletin on education in China, similar to the successful French journal *L'Ecole en Chine*;³⁸
- (5) To edit and distribute books, journals and other writings for the propagation of the Catholic faith, but these publications should have no political content;
- (6) To translate books and pamphlets into Chinese, including *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*;³⁹
- (7) To provide support and favor to those who publish and disseminate Catholic books and journals, especially Catholic editors and booksellers;
- (8) To take care of young people who seek to study abroad.⁴⁰

The organization of Catholic Action, medical work and a news agency, for instance, were new tasks embraced by the Commission beyond but connected with the primary tasks.

In terms of the structure, the Synodal Commission was placed “under the attention and authority of the Apostolic Delegation.” The Commission members were to “lend attentive ears and supportive hands” to his voice.⁴¹ Their office was in Naizifu 迺茲府, a traditional Chinese quadrangle in eastern Peiping city, originally a residence for imperial nursing mothers since the early 17th century. In 1926, Archbishop Costantini, aiming to avoid adverse sentiments by setting up the Apostolic Delegation among the foreign legations at Dongjiaomin Lane 東交民巷, purchased the premises allotted the courtyards to the Synodal Commission and Catholic Action headquarters.⁴² Costantini met daily with Commission members through a connecting door, and their discussions were often related to mission affairs. He recalled that their fraternal bond brought him comfort and joy, and their ideas and efforts provided invaluable assistance to him in “extremely difficult circumstances.”⁴³

38 The journal on Catholic schools in China was published from 1915 to 1917. Leeb, “1924年上海主教會議拉丁語文獻漢譯,” 29.

39 *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* is the official gazette of the Holy See.

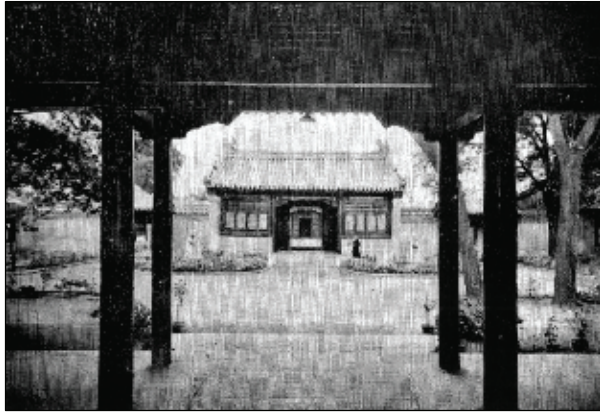
40 “Decretum Institutionis Commissionis,” *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis* (May 1928), 2; No. 33, Caput I, Titulus VIII, Liber I, Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924, 32-33.

41 Mittler, “Pro Memoria,” 4.

42 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. II, 12-13.

43 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. II, 6.

Picture 3. Entrance of the Apostolic Delegation in Peiping



Source: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, vol. 5, no. 5 (May 1932), 469.

3.3 Educational work of the Synodal Commission

As early as 1870, eighteen French vicars apostolic in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam discussed various missionary matters, including schools. Some proposed forming a committee for teaching materials, but it did not materialize.⁴⁴ In 1914, a decade ahead of the Shanghai Council, Joseph Schmidlin (1876-1944), a German missiology professor, convened conferences in the cities of Hong Kong, Hankou, Jinan and Shanghai to unite religious congregations in organizing mission schools and establishing Catholic universities. He suggested establishing organizations for financial support and personnel training. The Propaganda Fide received no prior notification of his actions; nevertheless, the progress was halted by World War I.⁴⁵

(i) Collectanea and Analecta Educationis

The previous efforts eventually led the Shanghai Council to establish a central organization for schools. The Synodal Commission's foremost and most critical duty was placed on educational matters. Missionaries like Bishop Walsh valued the *Digest of the Synodal Commission* (Latin: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*) for its "great services for the Church in China" over two decades. Under the successive editorship of Fathers Mittler (1928-1934) and Edouard Boedefeld (1934-1945), "the magazine was full of helpful information. It breathed a love of things Chinese that was particularly inspiring." Walsh believed that the reader would "find the collection a fascinating treasure house

44 Leeb, "1924年上海主教會議拉丁語文獻漢譯," 4.

45 Mittler, "Pro Memoria," 4; Leeb, "1924年上海主教會議拉丁語文獻漢譯," 5; Karl Müller, "The Legacy of Joseph Schmidlin," *Occasional Bulletin of Mission Research*, vol. 4, no. 3 (July 1980), 111.

of missionary lore.⁷⁴⁶

Picture 4. The contents page of the *Collectanea*’s inaugural issue

VOLUMEN I		NUMERUS 1	
MAIUS, 1928			
DOSSIERS de la COMMISSION SYNODALE			
DIGEST of the SYNODAL COMMISSION			
SUMMARIUM			
			Pag.
1.	Epistola introductoria Exc. Delegati Apostolici.....	1	
2.	Decretum Institutionis Commissionis.....	2	
3.	Au Lecteur.....	3	
4.	Préparons l'Avenir.....	6	
5.	Educational Development in China.....	9	
6.	Recent Changes in Educational Legislation.....	32	
7.	Amendements.....	38	
8.	État général de l'Éducation en Chine.....	40	
9.	Statut provisoire des écoles secondaires (Nanking).....	46	
10.	Renseignements scolaires.....	52	
11.	Acta Sanctae Sedis.....	67	
12.	Ci et Là.....	69	
13.	Bibliographica.....	76	
14.	Supplementum: Logic, a Bilingual Text.....	87	
COMMISSIO SYNODALIS IN SINIS			
6 A Nai Tse Fu, Peking			

Source: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, vol. 1, no. 1 (May 1928).

In the inaugural issue in May 1928, for instance, besides the introductory letter by the Apostolic Delegate and the decree establishing the Synodal Commission, nearly every article focused on education: “Educational Development in China” narrated the history of the traditional Chinese examination system from the beginning to the modernization efforts in the Late Qing and early Republican periods, from kindergarten to higher education; “Recent Changes in Educational Legislation” was an up-to-date report on the ordinance governing schools founded by foreign nationals (mostly mission schools) and the revised school system enacted by the Nationalist government in 1927; “État général de l’Éducation en Chine [General State of Education in China]” discussed the chapter on education of the *China Year Book 1928*, which reviewed the difficult situation encountered by Protestant schools⁴⁷ and com-

46 Walsh, “The Catholic Central Bureau of China,” 611-612.

47 Many Protestant schools, especially smaller ones, were closed either because Western members of the teaching staff were ordered by their consuls to leave China’s interior for personal safety or because they refused to submit to unreasonable government demands. H. G. W. Woodhead (ed.), *The China Year*

pared it with Catholic ones. It pointed out that the primary danger faced by mission schools was the anti-religious and materialistic tendencies among many Chinese intellectuals; “Statut provisoire des écoles secondaires (Nanking) [Provisional status of secondary schools]” featured the complete text of the Chinese edict promulgated in March 1928 printed side by side with the French translation; And finally, “Renseignements scolaires [School Information]” compiled French translation of recent educational news from secular newspapers in China.⁴⁸

Father Mittler appraised that the publication of the multilingual *Collectanea*—in Latin, Chinese, French and English—together with its sister Chinese periodical, *Analecta Educationis*, was the only task that the Synodal Commission had actually carried out—the fourth one, “to produce a bulletin on education in China.” The *Collectanea* appeared four times in 1928 and ten times per year from 1929 onwards. Each issue contained about one hundred pages, resulting in a yearly volume of around 1,000 pages. The contents extended beyond education, including various mission-related questions for the readers’ benefit. Mittler noted that newly arrived missionaries found it helpful for learning Chinese, especially through translations and terminology. Many essays also offered advice and guidance to Chinese clergy on proper religious practices and continued studies. As of June 1934, the subscription stood at slightly over 800, with about a hundred coming from outside China. Mittler reported that some missionaries ceased to renew their subscriptions, which cost six Mexican dollars per year,⁴⁹ due to economic crisis.⁵⁰

The *Analecta Educationis* was taken care by the Chinese members of the Synodal Commission, namely Fathers Philip Wu, Venanzio Chao and Paul Yu successively. Since its inauguration in March 1929 the *Analecta* was published four times a year, and then became a bi-monthly after Father Yu took over the editorship in early 1934.⁵¹ As its name suggests the journal primarily focused on educational matters, with the aim of

Book 1928 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), 498-499.

48 *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, vol. 1, no. 1 (May 1928), 9-66.

49 Mexican silver coins 墨西哥銀元(鷹洋) had a wide circulation in China for retail trade since the late 19th century until the Nationalist government officially abolished the tael and replaced it with the new Chinese dollar, or yuan, in the 1930s. “Tael,” Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/money/topic/tael> (accessed 28 January 2024).

50 Father Mittler proposed reducing the number of pages in the *Collectanea* to lower the annual subscription fee. “With the reduction in the quality of the *Collectanea*, the Moderator will not only be able to devote the most diligent care to its quality but will also be relieved of excessive burden.” Mittler, “Pro Memoria,” 11-12.

51 Mittler, “Pro Memoria,” 14.

serving as a platform to connect and foster the exchange of opinions among educators in Catholic schools nationwide. Its goal was to Christianize education in China: “The so-called omnipotent science in this world, when venturing beyond the bounds of faith, can hardly provide complete and correct answers to address the profound questions of human life. Therefore, pure Catholic education not only safeguards transcendental faith but also ensures that scientific studies remain on the right track.”⁵²

Although the annual subscription fee was relatively lower, which was two Mex dollars, after five years the number of subscribers barely reached 350, who were “only school directors and teachers, with few additional priests.”⁵³ In 1934, Father Yu restructured the “tasteless and meager” periodical, renaming it *Schola Catholica*. The first issue was published in April 1935 and continued until the last issue in June 1939, with a fortnightly frequency. The revamped periodical covered a broader range of content, including commentaries, government laws and decrees related to schools, news on Catholic and general education, biographical sketches of notable educators, book reviews, apologetic speeches, a reader’s forum, and a correspondence column.⁵⁴

Picture 5. The cover of *Analecta Educationis*, designed by Dom Adalbert Gresnigt OSB



Source: *Analecta Educationis*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1930).

(ii) School inspection and other entrusted tasks

A new position was created in early 1932 for liaison between the Synodal Commission and local vicariates, and better implementation of the Shanghai

52 編者，〈教育益聞錄之希望〉，《教育益聞錄》，卷2期1（1930），頁1。

53 Mittler, “Pro Memoria,” 14.

54 編者，〈卷首語〉，《公教學校》，卷1期1（1935），頁2-3。

Council's directives on Catholic schools. Archbishop Costantini named Father de Jonghe as the Inspector of Schools. Through him, "some beneficial school inspections have been conducted."⁵⁵ His first visitation trip began with the middle school of Fu Jen Catholic University in Peiping, and then major port cities including Tianjin, Shanghai and Hong Kong. The first purpose of inspection was to supervise and urge implementation of the Council's directives, including:

(1) In the territory of each missionary, primary schools for both boys and girls should be multiplied to the best of their abilities.

(2) In each vicariate or prefecture apostolic, there should be at least one secondary school, where students can be prepared for further studies in higher education.

(3) In addition to ordinary schools, efforts should be made as much as possible to establish normal schools for both sexes in each vicariate, where teachers for primary and secondary schools can be trained.⁵⁶

Secondly, it was hoped that he could negotiate with bishops and school directors to unify school administration and curricula, better implement Catholic education, and manage the compilation and use of textbooks.⁵⁷ In his memoirs, Costantini noted that Father de Jonghe dedicated his "enthusiasm, experience, and wisdom" to the advancement of Catholic education, regularly visiting schools across various regions of China.⁵⁸ After Father de Jonghe was appointed to Yunnan in 1933, Father Yu was appointed by Archbishop Zanin as the second Inspector of Schools. He continued to tour around the country to boost the morale of Catholic educators.⁵⁹

Father Mittler reported that the Synodal Commission failed to achieve the other four tasks regarding schools. The first task "to propose matters related to the religious, moral, literary, and scientific education of youth of both sexes in schools," lacked clear explanation. As of 1934, the Commission members engaged in extensive efforts to assist mission schools, including continuous exchange of letters, various treatises, dissertations, and questionnaires, as well as

⁵⁵ Mittler, "Pro Memoria," 4.

⁵⁶ NN. 796-798, Caput X-XII, Titulus VII, Liber IV, *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*, 241-242.

⁵⁷ 編者, 〈公教教育聯合會視察公教學校感言〉, 《聖教雜誌》, 卷21期4(1932), 頁193。

⁵⁸ Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. II, 6.

⁵⁹ 袁承斌, 〈公教學校的視察制度〉, 《全國公教教育會議紀要》(上海: 天主教教務協進委員會學校教育組, 1948), 頁64; 〈于總監督在武漢視察公教學校之經過〉, 《公教學校》, 期2卷11 (1936), 頁17-18。

providing advice, admonitions, and verbal instructions. Despite their endeavors, they sought a precise definition of the task “whereby things could progress more easily, more safely, and more quickly.”

The second task, “to accurately suggest and prepare texts or books suitable for use in schools,” required significant funds and skilled editors. This involved evaluating public school manuals for Catholic use and persuading publishers to accept minor changes. Additionally, they prepared suitable manuals and sought official recognition. Dominic Yuan Chengbin 袁承斌, a Catholic layman and secretary to Father Yu, had worked diligently and hired editors to assist him in recent years. Several series, adorned with illustrations, were in manuscript. More than 4,000 Mexican dollars had been spent so far. Considering the need for greater human and financial resources, Father Mittler noted that the “eventual success seems to be doubtful.”

He suggested categorizing future manuals into three groups: religious manuals (Catechism, Sacred Scripture, Apologetics), neutral subjects (Mathematics), and essential manuals for natural sciences, sociology, and pedagogy. These categories would be thoroughly discussed during Commission sessions.⁶⁰ For instance, from the observation of an Italian Salesian educator, Father Michael Suppo 蘇冠明 SDB (1902-1972),⁶¹ public school manuals often conflicted with Catholic doctrine, equating Jesus Christ with Muhammad and presenting erroneous theories on human origins, cultures, and religions. Civics textbooks overly emphasized freedom and equality, accepted divorce, and promoted ambiguous moral values. Biology and hygiene texts featured flawed Darwinian theories, detailed reproductive organs, and premature sex education for young students.⁶²

The third task, “to promote coordination among schools so that they may mutually assist one another,” was also “vague and overly complex.” What the Synodal Commission primarily did was providing various kinds of information to schools. Occasionally, it assisted in recruiting new teachers from graduates of Catholic institutions for schools. However, Mittler noted that great caution was necessary, and any recommendation should not be made without obtaining written and formal consent from the local Mission.

60 Mittler, “Pro Memoria,” 5-7.

61 Father Suppo, an Italian Salesian priest ordained in 1931, dedicated his life to Catholic education in Macau, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. “蘇冠明神父 (Michael Suppo),” Salesians of Don Bosco China Province of Mary Help of Christians, <http://www.sdb.org.hk/?p=4330> (accessed 31 January 2024).

62 蘇冠明, 〈審定課本與公教學校〉, 《全國公教教育會議紀要》, 頁35-37。

Regarding school coordination, the Inspector of Schools could play an active role to understand the conditions of mission schools across China. By comparing similar situations and broadening their perspective, he could help to foster “beneficial and effective connections and relationships” among the schools. However, Mittler admitted that nearly all Catholic schools in China, starting from primary levels, were “enclosed gardens” that kept outsiders away, often hindering their development. He proposed precisely defining and dividing the third task concerning schools.

Finally, the fifth duty was “to take care of young people who seek to study abroad.” Mittler gave no further details or the actual number of beneficiaries, besides saying: “It must be acknowledged that the Commission has, willingly or unwillingly, contributed financial aid until now and has drawn the attention of its readers to one or two of the best foreign institutions in its periodicals.”⁶³

In short, the publication of the *Collectanea* and the *Analecta Educationis / Schola Catholica* stands out as the most tangible achievement when evaluating the Commission’s principal work on education. Serving as a dynamic platform to amplify information flow and facilitate the exchange of views, the periodicals are not only significant in their historical context but also valuable materials for researchers studying the development of Chinese education. This accomplishment was realized the constraints of limited resources.

IV. Costantini’s reaching out to the Nationalist Government

The shortcomings of the first central coordinative body for Catholic missions in China were partly mitigated by Archbishop Costantini’s proactive engagement with the Chinese Nationalist government. Although an apostolic delegate, representing the pope in countries without full diplomatic relations, lacks diplomatic status, Costantini initiated contact with the Nationalist government shortly after the government’s establishment in Nanjing.⁶⁴ In January 1929, he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs⁶⁵ Thomas C. T. Wang 王正廷 (1882-1961) in Shanghai, and later paid a courtesy call to President Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887-1975) in Nanjing, concluding with a dinner attended

63 Mittler, “Pro Memoria,” 8.

64 “Apostolic delegate,” Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/apostolic-delegate> (accessed 16 January 2024).

65 The first meeting of Costantini with the president of the Republic of China was in January 1923. He was among the members of the diplomatic corps who were received by Li Yuanhong 黎元洪 (1864-1928). Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. I, 62.

by officials from the Foreign Ministry, the majority of whom were Protestants.

Costantini attributed the cordial atmosphere in the meetings with Chinese political leaders to Pope Pius XI's congratulatory telegram on the Nationalist government's reunification of China in August 1928, which "has awakened and left everyone with feelings of respect and consideration."⁶⁶ Reiterating the papal message, Costantini defined the Catholic Church's apolitical position and intention, expressing her esteem for the government in his address to President Chiang:

We stay outside of internal and foreign politics, and we do not interfere in party competitions, but we profess the most loyal respect for the Authority. It is our sincere desire to contribute to the great work of the rebirth of China.⁶⁷

In his report to Propaganda Fide, Costantini explained that his address also served as a refutation of the "slander against Catholics—that they are lackeys of Western imperialism." Therefore, he asserted that the reception given to the papal representative by the Nationalist government was "a solemn denial of this baseless accusation."⁶⁸

Recognizing the government's goodwill, he began negotiating with the Foreign Minister and the Chancellor of the Ministry of Education in late January on a convention between China and the Holy See, similar to the concords the Nationalist government was making with other Western powers. It was agreed that Catholic missions could open schools while adhering to government programs. Costantini also requested that seminaries and catechetical schools be recognized as independent institutions under the sole authority of ecclesiastical authorities, based on religious freedom.⁶⁹

Three months later, he learned that the Ministry of Education issued a decree allowing religious propaganda institutions to remain independent of

66 Letter from Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, "Visita del Delegato Apostolico al Governo di Nanchino," January 23, 1929, APF, N.S. vol. 1000, 555-558.

67 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. II, 81.

68 Costantini to van Rossum, "Visita del Delegato Apostolico al Governo di Nanchino," 23 January 1929, 558.

69 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. II, 83. The draft convention in Chinese detailed that the establishment of catechetical schools must be reported to and supervised by the local government. Ordinary schools not for the study of religion cannot be opened without permission from the Ministry of Education and must fully comply with the Chinese education system. 「教約草案」(1929), 〈教廷通使〉, 《外交部檔案》, 中央研究院近代史研究所檔案館藏, 11-06-21-05-01-025, 頁186。

government programs, provided they were no longer called schools.⁷⁰ The Regulations on the Educational Undertakings Established by Religious Organizations 宗教團體興辦教育事業辦法, dated April 23, 1929, mandated the following: (1) Schools at all levels subsidized by religious groups must adhere to the Ordinance on Private Schools; (2) Institutions established for the propagation of religious doctrines should not be referred to as schools; (3) Institutions established for the study of religion are required to fulfill the procedures for academic associations.⁷¹

“This is of little consequence; what matters is the substance,” Costantini commented on the second point. “This decree relieves us of a distressing doubt and ensures valuable instruments for religious propaganda. It is to be hoped that in practice, it will not raise further difficulties.” Although Costantini did not claim sole credit, believing Protestants might have also sought similar exemptions, he felt the papal message and friendly relations with the government fostered greater confidence in the work of Catholic missions. He further asserted: “I am pleased to note these facts in the face of the murmurs from certain French missionary circles, who were cold towards the papal message and displeased with my visit to Nanjing.”⁷² In a brief reply, the Holy See’s Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Gasparri (1852-1934) expressed his “satisfaction” with Costantini’s actions and report.⁷³

On June 1, Archbishop Costantini attended the funeral of Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (1866-1925, the first provisional president of the Republic of China) after confirming with the Foreign Ministry that the ceremonies would be purely national rituals. Despite Sun being a Protestant, the funeral was civil, excluding religious acts. Costantini joined representatives from 18 countries in acknowledging the new government’s success in reuniting China. They were received by President Chiang the day before the funeral, which was held in Nanjing.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, the negotiations for a Sino-Vatican convention had to be suspended due to strong reactions from the French Embassy, newspapers, and conservative missionaries who were firmly attached to the French Protectorate.

70 Letter from Celso Costantini to Pietro Gasparri, “Libertà accordata per i Seminari e le scuole di preghiera,” April 26, 1929, AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 87, 272.

71 〈宗教團體興辦教育事業〉，《教育益聞錄》，卷1期1（1929），頁176。

72 Letter from Costantini to Gasparri, “Libertà accordata per i Seminari e le scuole di preghiera,” 26 April 1929, 272-273.

73 Letter from Gasparri to Costantini, May 20, 1929, AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 87, 276.

74 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. II, 105-107; Planchet, *Les Missions de Chine et du Japon, Neuvième Année*, 602.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry dared not displease France, as they were negotiating a convention concerning Indochina (Vietnam). Costantini lamented: “Thus fell an attempt intended to free the Church of China, which already had native bishops, from the armor of foreign diplomatic instruments, which are now worn out and humiliating for the Chinese.”⁷⁵ It can be said that the decree on institutions for the study of religion was the only outcome from the brief negotiations.

V. Registration of Catholic schools

After years of intense debates over the restoration of educational sovereignty, the Ministry of Education amended and enacted the Ordinance on Private Schools 私立學校規程 in August 1929. Catholic and Protestant mission bodies faced a dilemma: whether to submit their schools to government supervision, transfer administration to Chinese Christians, and incorporate the Three Principles of the People 三民主義 into their curricula. The most contentious issue was the mandated separation of religion from education. Religious courses were to be elective at all levels of schools, and religious ceremonies were allowed only in secondary and tertiary institutions, with no compulsion for student attendance.⁷⁶

Since primary schools were prohibited from conducting religious ceremonies, many changed their names to *jingtang* to retain autonomy and Western missionary leadership, while higher-level schools tended to register with the government to ensure diploma recognition.⁷⁷ To enhance the intellectual standards of Catholic schools, especially at the secondary level, Costantini supported their submission to government supervision:

The freedom afforded to mission schools resulted in their establishment being too casual, rendering them markedly inferior to those operated by Protestants and unable to confer recognized diplomas. Catholic youth graduating from the old mission schools, when taking entrance exams for the Catholic University of Peking, were found to be completely unprepared and significantly inferior to their non-Christian peers.⁷⁸

75 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. II, 83-86. See also 陳方中、江國雄, 《中梵外交關係史》(台北:台灣商務印書館, 2003), 頁133-142。

76 〈教育部公布私立學校規程〉, 《教育益聞錄》, 卷1期4 (1929), 頁47-52。

77 Wiest, “Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools and China’s Drive toward a Modern Educational System (1850-1950),” 100.

78 Letter from Costantini to Gasparri, “Liberta accordata per i Seminari e le scuole di preghiera,” 26 April 1929, 273-274.

At the same time amid different opinions within the Church, Costantini deemed it appropriate to honor Dr. Sun and to incorporate the Three Principles of the People into Catholic school curricula.⁷⁹ The principles formed the basis of the ideologies of the Nationalist government, encompassing nationalism, democracy, and the livelihood of the people. Costantini endorsed the entire text's French translation, titled "Triple Demism," with annotations by Jesuit Father Pasquale D'Elia 德禮賢 SJ (1890-1963) from Aurora University in Shanghai.

Regarding the controversial Economic Demism (livelihood of the people), which Sun equated with socialism and communism, D'Elia argued that Sun's socialism differed from that condemned by the popes and that his communism was nominal, as it neither condemned private property nor asserted the state's absolute primacy over property, family, and education. He concluded that with some clarifications and adjustments, Three Principles of the People could align with Catholic teachings. Shortly after the publication of the French annotated translation in 1930, the Nanjing government requested 5,000 copies.⁸⁰ Costantini believed that a positive response to the mandatory teaching of the Three Principles was essential to retain Catholic schools.⁸¹ As he explained in a report to Rome:

The papal message has shown us the right path: to recognize the legitimate aspirations of the Chinese people; therefore, to admit what is good in the book of Sun Yat-sen, with the freedom to correct and reject what is erroneous. This is also the thought of the Synodal Commission.⁸²

In August 1932, Archbishop Costantini reaffirmed with Propaganda Fide that seminaries and catechetical schools across China could enjoy full freedom. Although registered private schools were barred from providing compulsory religious instruction during regular hours, they retained the freedom to offer such instruction after the official timetable. Costantini emphasized that only Catholics were obligated to attend religious courses, while non-Catholic stu-

⁷⁹ It was reported that during a meeting with an official from the Ministry of Education in December 1928 Costantini declared he would invite all Catholic schools in China to include the study of the Three Principles of the People in their curriculum. J.-M. Planchet, *Les Missions de Chine et du Japon, Neuvième Année* (Peking: Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1931), 601-602.

⁸⁰ Paschal M. D'Elia, "Catholic Missions: How the Catholic Church in China Emerged from the Nationalist Revolution (1926-1933)," Chapter XIV, *The China Year Book 1934* (London: The North China Daily News & Herald, 1934), 330.

⁸¹ Letter from Ildebrando Antoniutti (secretary of the Apostolic Delegation), 10 April 1929, ASPF, N.S. vol. 1000, 820.

⁸² Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina (1922-1933)*, vol. II, 67.

dents were free to participate at their discretion. He acknowledged the benefits in aligning missionaries with government programs, particularly, “in places where the missionaries were on good terms with the authorities, everything proceeded well.”⁸³

Father de Jonghe reported that the Catholic Church had maintained its position and even made notable progress in some areas.⁸⁴ The 1932 statistics compiled by the Synodal Commission show a prevalence of registered Catholic schools, particularly at secondary and tertiary levels. There was a significant increase in secondary schools following the Shanghai Council’s directive to have at least one in each apostolic vicariate and prefecture. Total student enrollment across all schools rose by 13 percent from 1931, reaching 330,483. Following the Ministry of Education’s approval of Tientsin Kung Shang College 天津工商學院 (formerly L’Institut des Hautes Études Industrielles et Commerciales) in 1933, all three Catholic tertiary institutions completed their registration.

Table 3. Statistics of Catholic Schools in 1932

Types of schools	Number of schools	Growth (decline) rate comparing to the previous year	Percentage of registered schools	Total number of students enrolled
Catechetical schools	9,442	+ 7 %	--	188,018
Lower primary schools	3,177	+ 15 %	17 %	107,616
Higher primary schools	309	No change	46 %	15,699
Lower middle schools	73	+ 33 %	47 %	8,995
Higher middle schools	28	+ 75 %	57 %	1,637
Normal schools	25	- 14 %	40 %	936
Special schools	108	+ 77 %	--	6,752
Universities	3	No change	66 %	830

Source: Synodal Commission in China/Agenzia Fides, 26 January 1932. AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 87, 372. Table created by the author.

83 Letter from Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, “Insegnamento religioso nelle scuole in Cina,” 20 August 1932, AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 87, 369-371.

84 G. de Jonghe, “Catholic Church in China, 1930,” *The China Mission Year Book* (Shanghai, 1931), 132.

VI. The role of Chinese Catholic laity

This paper does not exclusively emphasize the role of Archbishop Costantini and the priest-led Synodal Commission in promoting Catholic education and addressing its challenges during the early Republican era. The contributions made by the Chinese laity also worth our attention. For instance, Father de Jonghe noted that the Nanjing government's educational regulations did not discourage Catholics but "enlivened the apostolic spirit amongst the forces of Catholic Action and Catholic Youth." Both lay associations were organized and flourished under the direction of the Synodal Commission in the 1930s. The Catholic Youth (founded in 1928) dared to issue a pamphlet to the whole of China, denouncing those decrees as being "contrary to the natural law, the constitution, and the principles of Dr. Sun Wen (Yat-sen)." They demanded religious instruction in Catholic schools, and the liberty of holding religious ceremonies in the educational establishments. Likewise, Catholic Action members distributed pamphlets on the necessity of freedom in education and of studying religion.⁸⁵

After the government rejected a petition from Protestants (the Church of Christ in China 中華基督教會) in 1930, which demanded that religious courses and services be permitted in primary schools, Catholic Action members in Peiping submitted another plea in the following year. They advocated for a law to protect educational enterprises and Church properties with the support of Catholic members of the National Assembly 國民會議.⁸⁶ In the words of Archbishop Costantini: "If an offensive were to be launched, it would act through Catholic Action. But I believe that we must act with cautious prudence, in order not to risk losing the practical advantages that we have achieved with the government."⁸⁷

Indeed, given that foreign missionaries, including the Apostolic Delegate, might carry an imperialist or colonialist stigma in the minds of the Chinese, the participation of Catholic laypeople in the public sphere would help advance the Church's interests and reputation. An earlier example of this was when Catholic Action members played a splendid role in lobbying members of the National Assembly to reject the Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 government's proposal of making Confucianism the state religion, and joining forces with Protestants, Muslims,

85 G. de Jonghe, "Catholic Church in China, 1930," 132-133.

86 〈北平公教進行會電爭保障宗教教育案〉，《聖教雜誌》，卷20期6（1931），頁376。

87 Letter from Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, "Insegnamento religioso nelle scuole in Cina," August 20, 1932, AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 87, 370.

Buddhists, and Taoists to advocate for full religious freedom in 1913.⁸⁸

Regarding individuals, the names of two Chinese writers on Catholic education frequently emerged in the periodicals during the data collection for this paper: Dominic Yuan Chengbin and Anthony Li Zhengfu 黎正甫 (1908-1988). Li's obituary for Yuan in 1949 revealed their long work relationship and underscores the challenges the laity faced in balancing their commitment to Catholic apostolic work with earning a living.

A native of Shanghai, Yuan joined the Society of Jesus, studied in France, but left after three years, feeling unsuited for religious life. He taught at Fu Jen University in Peiping and collaborated with the Synodal Commission to prepare school manuals. In 1935, as General Secretary of Guangqi Academy, the research branch of Catholic Action of China, he founded and edited a Chinese journal *Nova Stella Polaris* 新北辰, frequently writing about Catholic school manuals, the modern education system, and civic education.

Originally from Fujian, Anthony Li was a student of Yuan at Xuhui Normal School 徐匯師範學校 in Shanghai before Yuan departed for France.⁸⁹ Years later, in 1931, Li received a telegram from Yuan inviting him to help edit school manuals. Initially hesitant, Li decided to accept after meeting with Father de Jonghe, who was on an inspection tour of schools and confirmed the Synodal Commission's new project. Li then moved to Peiping and lived with Yuan's family. He wrote extensively for *Schola Catholica* (where Yuan recommended him to Father Paul Yu as editor-in-chief), *Revue Catholique* in Shanghai and several other Catholic periodicals around the country, focusing primarily on education, church history and religious life.⁹⁰

After the birth of his second child, Yuan relinquished the editorship of *Nova Stella Polaris* to Father John Niu and shifted to the printing business to support his family. Li, a bachelor, recalled having difficulty understanding Yuan's pragmatic approach and noted that they had some disagreements. Nevertheless,

88 Sergio Ticozzi, "Christians and Freedom of Religion in the Early Republic of China," *Tripod*, 162 (Autumn 2011), 35-37.

89 Founded in 1925, Xuhui Normal School was the only Catholic institution for the training of teachers in China at that time, but it had to halt operations and was converted into Huishi Middle School 匯師中學 in 1934 due to government regulations that forbade privately-run normal schools. 黎正甫, 〈悼念袁承斌先生〉, 頁54; "學校歷史", 徐匯區匯師小學, <https://hsxx.xhedu.sh.cn/xxgk/mid.htm> (accessed 8 August 2024).

90 A search in the database "全國報刊索引" [National Newspapers and Periodicals Indexes] show there are 170 articles authored by Li Chengfu in ten Chinese Catholic periodicals, with about 90 percent published between 1930 and 1939, and the rest published afterwards. The search results for Yuan Chengbin show 56 articles (including translations) in seven periodicals, 53 of which were published between 1930 and 1939.

he later came to believe that Yuan's decision was justified, noting that since he was not a priest, he could not forsake his family to focus solely on the Church's apostolic work.

The Japanese occupation of Peiping in 1937 led to the confiscation of Yuan's printing house and forced the two laymen to flee south. At Yuan's advice, Li sojourned in Hong Kong to assist the Catholic Truth Society (CTS, the diocesan publisher). Yuan proceeded to southwestern China, where he first taught at a public university and then returned to business. Li later began teaching Chinese literature at South China Regional Seminary and joined the Hong Kong diocesan Chinese weekly, but relocated to southwestern China when the Japanese advanced.

In February 1948, Yuan was present at the National Catholic Education Congress in Shanghai, which addressed common concerns among Catholic educators, urging improvements in school education and redoubled efforts to support post-war reconstruction through universal education and social morality. He delivered a lecture proposing the expansion and enhancement of the school inspection system at both national and diocesan levels.⁹¹ A year later, he decided to go to Taiwan because of the uncertain futures of Peiping and Shanghai but tragically died in a shipwreck, leaving behind his wife and two young children. He was aboard the overloaded steamer Taiping 太平輪, which sailed from Shanghai to Keelung at midnight after January 27, 1949, with its lights out due to a curfew. It sank after colliding with a cargo ship, with the death toll estimated at over 1,000 people.⁹²

Li, who had returned to Hong Kong, published a long obituary to grieve over the loss of his respected teacher and colleague. He remained in the British Crown Colony for the rest of his life, teaching at the seminary and continuing his writing. In 1960, he published a monograph titled *History of Catholic Education* 天主教教育史. After retiring in 1968, he volunteered as a proofreader for the CTS and the diocesan weekly.⁹³ The Catholic laity's involvement in the work of the Synodal Commission, which this section attempts to document, has remained largely unknown due to a lack of material. Through their writings

91 袁承斌, 〈公教學校的視察制度〉, 《全國公教教育會議紀要》, 頁64-67; Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, 143-147. Details about the congress and summaries of the lectures can be found in 《全國公教教育會議紀要》.

92 〈公教聞人袁承斌遇難〉, 《益世周刊》, 卷32期1 (1949.3.13), 頁12; ; “太平輪沉沒事件,” Wikipedia, <https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-tw/太平輪沉沒事件> (accessed 8 August 2024).

93 黎正甫, 〈悼念袁承斌先生〉, 頁54-57; 林雪碧, 〈黎正甫與《羅馬教皇世系》〉, 《天主教研究學報》, 期七 (2016), 頁236-239; 尹雅白, 〈中國文學 黎正甫教授〉, 《牧心集》, <https://frjameswan.org/my-vocation20> (accessed 8 August 2024).

and pleas, it is hoped that the spirit and significance of Catholic education can be better appreciated by the Chinese people.

Epilogue

Archbishop Zanin continued to lead the Synodal Commission with great interest after Costantini's departure from China in 1933. New tasks, such as coordinating medical work and running the first Catholic news agency in China, *Agenzia Lumen* 寵光新聞社, were added to the Commission's daily activities. Although most of the Commission's work was halted during the war, German Father Boedefeld struggled to continue publishing the *Collectanea* from Japanese-occupied Peiping for the benefit of missionaries, until his death two days before the Japanese surrender in 1945. A Chinese priest, Father Feng Jizhang 馮繼璋, kept the *Lumen* news dispatch going after American Father Kaschmitter was sent to an internment camp following the outbreak of the Pacific War in late 1941.⁹⁴

Bishop Walsh assessed the value of the Commission as a means of liaison over the difficult years, noting that the connection between the bishops of China and the Synodal Commission may not have been ideal, but it was likely all that was possible given the vast and varied country. "No nationwide meetings of the bishops could be held to discuss mission matters in general, the Shanghai Council itself being the first and the last occasion of that nature." In compensation, regional meetings of bishops were instituted, focusing on the national movements and key activities promoted by the Synodal Commission.

The Synodal Commission's diverse composition facilitated collaboration among religious congregations. Bishop Walsh noted: "The members of the Commission were a cosmopolitan group and were subject to changes, moreover, which had the effect of making them widely representative." Since the members were loaned temporarily by their bishops and superiors, it was inevitable that they would be recalled within a few years and be replaced by others. Walsh believed these changes did not impair efficiency but rather introduced capable missionaries to the Commission over twenty years. "From first to last, in short, it was thanks to the Apostolic Delegation that the important work of coordination and uniformity envisaged by the First Chinese Council was orga-

94 馮繼璋, 〈二十年來之公教教育聯合會〉 馮繼璋, 〈二十年來之公教教育聯合會〉, *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, vol. 19, no. 7/12 (1947), 343-344.

nized, developed, supported and preserved.”⁹⁵

Political, geographical, and manpower constraints hindered the Synodal Commission from achieving greater success. Less than a year after the war ended, in April 1946, Pope Pius XII (pontificate 1939-1958) established the Catholic Hierarchy in China, and Archbishop Zanin planned to reorganize and modernize the Commission. He proposed several committees to coordinate policies in areas such as agriculture, publication, schools, hygiene, and the lay apostolate (Catholic Action). Following his recall by the Holy See due to the elevation of the Apostolate Delegation in July, the plan was realized by the first Apostolic Internuncio to China, Archbishop Antonio Riberi 黎培理 (1897-1967, tenure 1946-1959).⁹⁶ The new organization, renamed the Catholic Central Bureau, comprised ten departments and a dozen priest-officers.⁹⁷ The Bureau played a crucial role in revitalizing the Catholic missions during the regime change until it was banned by the Communist government in 1951.

APPENDIX

Abbreviations for mission societies and religious orders

CICM	Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Scheut Mission)	聖母聖心會 (司各特會)
CM	Congregation of the Mission (Lazarists)	遣使會 (拉匝祿會)
MEP	Missions Etrangères de Paris	巴黎外方傳教會
MM	Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll Mission)	美國天主教外方傳教會 (瑪利諾會)
OFM	Order of Friars Minor (Franciscan Order)	小兄弟會 (方濟會)
OSB	Order of St. Benedict Oblates of St. Benedict (Third Order Benedictine)	本篤會 本篤第三會
SDB	Salesians of Don Bosco	鮑思高慈幼會
SJ	Society of Jesus	耶穌會
SVD	Society of the Divine Word	聖言會

95 Walsh, “The Catholic Central Bureau of China,” 612-613.

96 Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, 51-53.

97 Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, 59-67.

Bring the discussion back to the table: A comparison between the content of the Canton Conference (1667-1668) and the Shanghai Council (1924)

Benedict Keith Ka-Kei Ip¹

Abstract

As the first Apostolic Delegate to China, Mons. Celso Benigno Luigi Costantini (1876-1958) convened in Shanghai the First National/Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in China in May 1924. The Council tended to establish, as soon as possible, “a local Church.” In the history of the Catholic mission in China, we have seen the tradition of having discussions and meetings to make essential decisions among the missionaries and to reflect on the resolutions of the Holy See.

The Canton Conference (1667-1668) was regarded as one of the earliest meetings among missionaries in different congregations, which also laid down some crucial resolutions for mission work in China. The first part of this article will review the historical context of the “conference/meeting/council” in the Catholic Church in China, especially the Canton Conference and the Shanghai Council (1924). The second part of this article will closely examine the content and resolutions made in these two important meetings in the 17th and 20th centuries.

Having known the changes the focus shifted from pastoral needs to the setup of the local Church, the Shanghai Council no doubt has an obvious target to systematically inculturate the Church in China, to minimize the colonial influences, as well as to realize the dream of the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*.

Keyword: Canton Conference 1667-1668; Shanghai Council 1924; *Maximum Illud*;
Catholic Church in China; Diocese de Macau; Macao;

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1. Introduction

*“So teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom.”
(Psalm 90:12)*

The *Primum Concilium Sinense*, a.k.a. the Shanghai Council (1924), is a pivotal moment in the history of the Catholic Church in China. The Church navigated the complex political and social landscape of the early 20th century and sought to adapt its mission and strategies to the Chinese context. The council served as a pivotal moment in shaping the Church’s relationship with the Chinese government, its efforts to inculturate and sinicize its practices, and its broader attempts to maintain a presence and influence within the country.

As an archivist who is specialized in archival catalog, physical conservation of archival and patrimonial objects, as well as some experience in reading old documents, I would like to offer some research directions for further consideration, rather than some insightful and deliberate historical researches. The research method of my paper is inspired by what is called the content analysis approach. Selected contents of the articles in the Canton Conference (1667-1668) or the Shanghai Council will be mentioned when it is appropriate to be quoted to support the discussion. This article’s research perspective(s) on the Shanghai Council is a partial pursuit. Instead, I want to highlight the articles and points that might sound less discussed to help us understand more about the importance of the Shanghai Council. I propose this approach as it seems that this way of deliberation was not mentioned in other researches.

In the first part of this article, I will present the social, political and ecclesiastical context of the Canton Conference and the Shanghai Council. It will then follow with the comparison of these two final documents in order to highlight some significant features of them. The final part of this article will conclude the two important aspects in these two meetings: The pastoral’s; and the Church authorities’ resolutions. Kindly comment on my humble contribution.

2. The context of the Canton Conference

The Canton Conference (from December 18, 1667, to January 26, 1668)² is regarded as an essential episode in the history of Christianity in China. It is a well-known meeting that was convened after religious persecution broke out in the early Qing Dynasty because of the so-called “Calendar Case.” The

2 Cummins (1993), “A question of Rites – Friar Domingo Navarrete and the Jesuits in China”, 147-150.

Calendar Case (liyu, 曆獄) is a contention over calendar issues between Johann Adam Schall von Bell (湯若望, 1592-1666) and Yang Guanxian (楊光先, 1597-1669). The persecution officially began when in 1664, Yang successfully accused Fr. Schall having selected an inauspicious date and site for the burial of Prince Rong (榮親王), which caused the death of both the consort Dong and Shunzhi emperor (順治帝, 1638-1661).

Very few missionaries were retained at the imperial court or found ways to hide themselves. Among the missionaries to be sent in exile, some died when they had to gather in Beijing or were deported to Canton. So, twenty-five missionaries were detained in Canton for five years, from March 25, 1666 till September 1671³. Since they could not do any direct apostolic works, they had plenty of time to read, translate, and discuss among themselves many issues regarding practical pastoral matters. Two died before the formal Conference started. Thus, twenty-three missionaries (19 Jesuits, 3 Dominicans, and 1 Franciscan) participated in the Conference.

In summary, the Canton Conference resolutions can be identified in 1700 in the Jesuit publication “*Acta cantoniensia authentica*.” The articles were prepared by one of the Conference attendees, Fr. Jean-François Ronusi de Ferrariis (李方西, 1608-1671)⁴, and confirmed by the Vice-Provincial, Fr. Feliciano Pacheco (成際理, 1622-1687). The original articles were written in Latin and included the “forty-two articles.” This publication was kept in the Jesuit Archives - the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI). It was published 42 years after the Conference took place. It is neither original minutes nor proceedings because the resolutions were summarized, numbered, and presented in paragraph form. The content of the publication is divided into three parts:

1. *Occasio, seu origo Actorum Cantoniensium* (The occasion or origin of the acts in Canton);
2. *Formatio, ac descriptio Actorum Cantoniensium* (Formation and description of the acts in Canton);
3. *Subscriptio, & confirmatio Actorum Cantoniensium* (Signature and confirmation of the acts in Canton)

The content of the Canton Conference mainly discussed pastoral work, such as the cultural adaptation aspects of Baptism: “The Holy Oil should be imparted to grown-up women in the area relatively near the upper part of the forehead by using a silver brush, which has a brush on one side and the other

3 Cummins (1993), “A question of Rites – Friar Domingo Navarrete and the Jesuits in China”, 144-145.

4 “All these (articles) have been written by the hand of Father Joannis Francisci de Ferrariis ...” See *Acta Cantoniensia Authentica* (1700), 34-35.

being made into a pincer for holding a piece of cotton, with which oil may be wiped away to avoid direct contact by the hand of the priest himself.”⁵

The Canton Conference was always mentioned as an episode of the Rites Controversy because it did have one resolution about Chinese rites.⁶ But actually, this famous article number forty-one was intensively debated only at the end of the conference; it was tabled on the last afternoon of the conference proceedings. Therefore, the high exposure of article forty-one is unfair to the rest of the articles, which tackled mainly practical apostolic issues at that time.⁷

3. The context of the *Primum Concilium Sinense*

Since the late 19th century, some main historical elements have created the Shanghai Council's environment. The first element is the intervention of the French Protectorate over the mission in China. After the Opium Wars, when Britain and the United States had signed treaties with the Qing government, France also sought to assert its influence in China through a policy of diplomatic competition.

In 1843, France sent Joseph Théodose Marie Melchior de Lagrené (拉萼尼, 1800-1862) to China, who, in 1844, negotiated the Treaty of Whampoa after the Opium War. This treaty not only legalized the practice of Christianity in China but also provided certain privileges for French missionaries, allowing them to build churches, schools, and cemeteries in the five treaty ports. Subsequently, he lobbied further and led to the 1845 Edict of Tolerance, which lifted the ban on Catholicism.

The French missionaries and bishops continued to report cases of persecution and killing of missionaries back to France⁸. In addition to the influence of the French government, the Vatican canceled the Beijing and Nanjing Diocese under the Portuguese *Padroado* in 1856 and abolished the *Padroado* in 1857.⁹ France obtained the right to defend the church in China from the Treaty of Tianjin in 1858, which gave France the right to protect missionaries, and

5 Canton Conference article no.5: 司鐸應用銀製的刷子在成年婦女的前額上方傳至聖聖油。刷子的另一端是鑷子，用來夾著棉花去抹掉流下來的聖油。這樣，司鐸的手便無須接觸受傳者。

6 Ka Kei Ip, “Canton Conference (1667-1668) - Its Significance on the 42 Articles”, *Logos & Pneuma: Chinese Journal of Theology*, 37(2012): 277-316.

7 Ibid

8 衛青心著，黃慶華譯，“法國對華傳教政策下卷”（北京：中國社會科學院，1991），頁694。

9 羅光，“教廷與中國使節史”，頁188。

from the Treaty of Beijing in 1860, which gave France the right to safeguard missionaries. Consequently, France's role as protector of Catholic interests allowed it to increase its overall political influence in China, constraining the Holy See's ability to deal with China independently.

The second important element is the implementation of the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*. On November 30, 1919, Pope Benedict XV published *Maximum Illud*, which reflected many of Fr. Vincent Lebbe's (1887-1940) ideas and laid the principle of the renewal of the Catholic missions on autochthonous bases. In short, Fr. Vincent Lebbe rejected: 1. the French Protectorate; 2. the western character of the Church; 3. the condition of "assistants to foreign priests" in which the local priests were kept.

In this apostolic letter, the pope urged the heads of the missions to find vocation among the local people:

Concern for Training of Local Clergy

17. The Apostolic See has always urged the directors of missions to realize that this is a very serious obligation of their office and vigorously to put it into action. Here in Rome the colleges - both the old colleges and the newer ones - that train clerics for the foreign missions, have already shown their earnestness in the matter. This is particularly true of those training men for the Oriental rites. And yet it is a deplorable fact that, even after the Popes have insisted upon it, there still remain sections of the world that have heard the Faith preached for several centuries, and still have a local clergy that is of inferior quality. If it is also true that there are countries that have been deeply penetrated by the light of the Faith, and have, besides, reached such a level of civilization that they produce eminent men in all the fields of secular life - and yet, though they have lived under the strengthening influence of the Church and the gospel for hundreds of years, they still cannot produce Bishops for their spiritual government or priests for their spiritual guidance.¹⁰

The apostolic letter did not receive a warm acceptance, and Fr. Lebbe, "for the sake of peace," was sent to exile in Europe (1920-1927), where he was received in a private audience by Pope Benedict XV on Dec. 28, 1920.¹¹

10 Apostolic letter MAXIMUM ILLUD of the supreme Pontiff Benedict XV (1919), https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xv_apl_19191130_maximum-illud.html

11 A more completed account of the process from Maximum Illud to the Shanghai Council with the support of Fr. Vincent Lebbe, please refer to Franz Gassner, "From Maximum Illud to the First National Synod Primum Concilium Sinenses," in *Orientis Aura - Macau Perspectives in Religious Studies*, 5(2020):59-76.

Pope Pius XI (1922-39) established the Apostolic Delegation to China in 1922 and appointed Monsignor Celso Benigno Luigi Costantini (who later became a cardinal in 1953) as the first Apostolic Delegate. He arrived in Hong Kong on November 8 and in Beijing on December 29 of the same year.

On December 12, 1923, Mons. Costantini appointed Fr. Cheng Hede (成何德) as Apostolic Prefect of Hankou (Hubei), and on April 15, 1924, Fr. Sun Dezhen (孫德禎) as Apostolic Prefect of Anguo (Hebei). They were the first Chinese priests to be appointed Apostolic Prefects.

From May 15 to June 12, 1924, Mons. Costantini convoked in Shanghai the First Plenary Council of China.¹² By reading the actual significance and innovation of this council that Monsignor Celso Costantini wants to deliver, it is essential to examine the final document that the Council has concluded and confirmed by the Holy See. In the following section, I will highlight the content and try to make a comparison with the Canton Conference.

4. A content analysis of the articles between *Acta Cantoniensia Authentica* and the *Acta et Decerta I Concilii Plenarii Sinensis*

To compare the content of the two “meetings,” I will mainly refer to my previous translated version of *Acta Cantoniensia Authentica*, available in 1700 and prepared by Fr. Jean-François Ronusi de Ferrariis, SJ. The approved text *Acta et Decerta I Concilii Plenarii Sinensis*¹³ is the consequence of the Shanghai Council. It reflects the idea of the Apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*. The *Acta et Decreta* contained 861 articles in total and was divided into five volumes:

1. *Normae generales* (General provisions);
2. *De personis et officiis* (Personnel/Priesthood and its duties);
3. *De rebus* (Practical/Pastoral matters);
4. *De Evangelisationis opere* (Evangelization);
5. *De processibus, delictis et et processibus, delictis and poenis* (Proceedings, Offences and Punishments).

¹² 聖神修院神哲學院，教會史（香港：公教真理學會，2014），頁216-217。

¹³ In gratitude to Prof. Leopold Leeb for having his published translation available to consult, also with the help of Fr. Cyril Law Jr. to forward the information and articles to me personally. See Leo's translation version “上海主教會議拉丁文文獻漢譯 Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924”, which is based on *Episcopatus Sinarum, Primum Concilium Sinense, Anno 1924* (Taipei: Kwangchi, 1961).

The Resolutions and Decrees have similarities and subtle differences in structure and content with the Code of Canon Law approved by Pope Benedict XV in 1917. The similarities can be seen in the fact that the Code of Canon Law of 1917 also consists of five books: *Normae generales*, *De personis*, *De rebus*, *De processibus*, *De delictis et poenis*.¹⁴

4.1 Insights from both “meetings” from a pastoral point of view

The first approach is to compare the pastoral decisions to see if there are some significant findings, as it is vital to confirm that the Canton Conference mainly discussed a vast amount of pastoral issues. For this purpose, I will select a few of the articles from the Shanghai Council in each category or provisions that are still in use today for reference. To limit this paper’s use and length, I will only quote one article from the Shanghai Council for observation.

第一項，聖洗	Titulus I. De Baptismo
<p>[上海會議254]《教會法典》第755.1條：聖洗應該隆重地舉行，但要遵守第759條。</p> <p>755.2條：出於重大的理由，當地主教能允許把嬰兒聖洗的儀式使用於成年人的洗禮。</p> <p>嬰兒洗禮所規定的儀式始終也能使用於成年的女子；但為年輕男子需要正當的理由。</p>	<p>Can. 755.1. Baptismus sollemniter conferatur, salvo praescripto can. 759.</p> <p>755.2. Loci Ordinarius potest gravi et rationabili de causa indulgere ut caeremoniae praescriptae pro baptismo infantium adhibeantur in baptismo adultorum. Caerimoniae pro baptismo infantium praescriptae semper adhiberi possunt pro mulieribus adultis; pro viris aute iusta de causa.</p>

In the Shanghai Council, it is evident that there is one chapter dedicated to describing the administration of the sacraments. A fundamental style is like article 254 (quoted directly from the Shanghai Council, with the bracket [] indicating the article number); for instance, many articles are cited by Canon Law. However, the Canton Conference does not have this style of quotation¹⁵.

第二項，堅振	Titulus II. De Confirmatione
<p>[271]</p> <p>第780條：堅振聖事的施行是透過傳的手禮（扶手禮）和額頭上擦油，還有教會在禮儀手冊所規定的話語。</p> <p>第781.1條：堅振用的聖油必須是主教祝聖的，雖然這個聖事可以由司鐸施行，根據法律或根據宗座的許可。</p> <p>781.2條：擦油禮不能用任何工具，施行者必須親手在受堅振者的頭上擦油。</p>	<p>Can. 780. Sacramentum confirmationis conferri debet per manus impositionem cum unctione charismatis in fronte et per verba in pontificalibus libris ab Ecclesia probatis praescripta.</p> <p>Can. 781.1 Chrisma in sacramento confirmationis adhibendum, debet esse ab episcopo consecratum, etiamsi sacramentum a presbytero, ex iure vel ex apostolico indulto, ministretur.</p> <p>781.2. Unctio autem ne fiat aliquo instrument, sed ipsa ministry manu capiti confirmandi rite imposita.</p>

14 劉國鵬，剛恒毅與中國天主教的本地化（北京：社會科學文獻出版社，2011），頁159.

15 Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1917 and, in revised form, in 1983.

We can identify the different approaches between the Shanghai Council and the Canton Conference in article 271, particularly in the pastoral and cultural consideration in anointing the Confirmation Oil to the faithful.¹⁶

第三項，感恩祭	Titulus III. De Eucharistia
[293] 《教會法典》第819條：彌撒聖祭時必須用自己禮儀的語言，也就是教會認可的語言。	Can. 819. Missae sacrificium celebrandum est lingua liturgica sui cuiusque ritus ab Ecclesia probati.

It is very clear that the language of celebrating Holy Mass in the Church is Latin, which is the official language recognized by the Church as if the official language of the Shanghai Council was Latin, regardless of the country of origin of the participants in any “official” meetings in the Church across centuries as well.

第四項，懺悔聖事	Titulus IV. De Paenitentia
[326] 在傳教區，如果還沒有堂區和準堂區，司鐸們僅享有委任的司法權。因此他們應該關注本地主教所交給他們的職權的權限。 面對中國司鐸缺少和距離很長的情況，中華的主教們為了克服告解困難而作如下的規定： 1 任何司鐸無論去哪裡，只要他有本主教的批准，可以聽任何其他的司鐸的告解。 2 任何合法的司鐸如果被邀請去附近的代牧區探訪一個病人，就可以在那裡聽一切信徒的告解，可以為他們舉行彌撒，發送聖體，可以為嬰兒施洗，可以宣講福音……，但不能主持婚禮。	In Missionibus, ubi neque paroeciae neque quasi-paroeciae constitutae sunt, sacerdotes nonnisi delegata iurisdictione gaudent; attendant igitur ad quos limites se extendant facultates ipsas ab Ordinariis concessas. Ut confitendi peccata difficultati, quae ex penuria sacerdotum et longinqua locorum distantia sequitur, remedium afferatur, consentientibus locorum Ordinariis Sinensibus, haec statuuntur: 1 Omnis sacerdos, quocumque iter facit, dummodo a proprio suo Ordinario approbatus fuerit, cuiuslibet sacerdotis confessionem audire potest. 2 Omnis sacerdos, legitime approbatus, in vicinam alterius Vicariatus missionem pro infirmo vocatus, potest, data hac occasione, audire confessiones omnium christifidelium... si petant, sacrum facere et communionem distribuere, infantes baptizare, et verbum divinum praedicare..., exclusa tamen celebratione matrimonii.

As China has always been a mission area since the reception of Catholicism from the Ming Dynasty, there must be some exceptions to be granted in the past centuries. In Shanghai Council, it made clear that the Bishop or the Vicar must be able to exercise the authority to grant the canonical faculties to a priest who is under the jurisdiction of his leadership. However, there isn’t such articles and clauses in the Canton Conference.

16 Canton Conference Article 5: We also think that the Holy Oil should be imparted to grown up women in the area rather near to the upper part of the forehead by using a silver brush, which has a brush on one side and the other being made into a pincer for holding a piece of cotton, with which oil may be wiped away to avoid direct contact by the hand of the priest himself. / 司鐸應用銀製的刷子在成年婦女的前額上方傳至聖聖油。刷子的另一端是攝子，用來夾著棉花去抹掉流下來的聖油。這樣，司鐸的手便無須接觸受傳者。

第五項，終傅聖事	Titulus V. De Extrema Unctione
<p>[353] 《教會法典》第945條：在臨終傅油的聖事應該使用橄欖油，這應該是特別為此由主教所祝聖，或由宗座獲得這種特權的司鐸祝聖。</p> <p>第946條：本堂司鐸應該把終傅的油保存在乾淨和佈置端莊的地方在白銀或錫製造的器皿，也不能保存在自己家裡，除非根據第735條。</p> <p>947.1條：應該按照禮儀書規定的言詞、順序和儀式施行傅油聖事；然而，在急需的情況下單獨一個地方擦油也足夠，最好在額頭上，並用簡化的言詞，但如果危險過去了應該彌補所缺少的傅油。</p> <p>947.2條：在腎腰擦油都可以忽略。</p> <p>947.3條：在腳上擦油可以因任何合理的理由而忽略。</p> <p>947.4條：除非有重大的理由，施行者必須親手擦上油，也不能用任何工具。</p>	<p>Can. 945. Oleum olivarum, in sacramento extremæ unctionis adhibendum, debet esse ad hoc benedictum ab Episcopo, vel a presbytero qui facultatem illud benedicendi a Sede Apostolica obtinuerit.</p> <p>Can. 946. Oleum infirmorum parochus loco nitido et decenter ornato in vase argenteo vel stanneo diligenter custodiat, nec domi retineat nisi ad normam can. 735.</p> <p>Can. 947.1. Unctiones verbis, ordine et modo in libris ritualibus præscripto, accurate peragantur; in casu autem necessitatis sufficit unica unctio in uno sensu seu rectius in fronte cum præscripta forma breviori, salva obligatione singulas unctiones supplendi, cessante periculo.</p> <p>947.2 Unctio renum semper omittatur.</p> <p>947.3. Unctio pedum ex qualibet rationabili causa omitti potest.</p> <p>947.4. Extra casum gravis necessitatis, unctiones ipsa ministri manu nulloque adhibito instrumento fiant.</p>

This example reveals the right of a Bishop or a Vicar in the mission area or a Diocese assigned to him. In addition, the regulation to administer the Holy Oil to a sick person was regulated clearly in the Code of Canon Law. The ideas in the Canton Conference were already incorporated into the Code of Canon Law in terms of administering Oil at the feet.¹⁷

第六項，司鐸聖秩	Titulus VI. De Ordine
<p>[376] 在舉行聖秩禮儀方面，宗座代牧都有特殊的特權。</p>	<p>Quoad tempus conferendi ordines specialem habent facultatem Vicarii Apostolici.</p>

At the Canton Conference, we do not see any clauses related to the Holy Order, while the Shanghai Council contains quite a group of long clauses. It made clear that the Bishop or the Vicar have the same status regarding the right to ordain a priest.

¹⁷ Canton Conference Article 26: Extreme unction should not be denied to adult women, unless there is some serious inconvenience: but women's feet should not be anointed. / 除非嚴重不便，否則應向成年婦女施行病人傅油聖事，但不應該在她們的腳上傅油。

第七項，婚姻聖事	Titulus VII. De Matrimonio
[414] 在婚禮方面，特別如果涉及不同宗教信仰者的婚姻，傳教士們應該注意讓自己的信徒嚴謹、絕對和不可侵犯地遵守和認真實現一切來自《自登基之日》和《自從上主聖意》詔書以及傳信部的其他關於中國禮儀的宣言。因此司鐸們有義務去調查那些在舉行婚姻時也許發現的迷信習俗，要通知本地主教並試圖徹底除掉這些迷信。	In celebratione matrimonii, et maxime ubi agitur de matrimoniis cum dispensatione disparitatis cultus initis, missionarii, solliciti sint ut christiani sibi subditi exacte, absolute ac inviolabiliter observent, et absque ulla tergiversatione adimpleant omnia et singula, quae tum in constitutionibus “Ex illa die” et “Ex quo”, tum in variis declarationibus S. Congregationis quae super eadem materia Rituum Sinensium prodierunt, observanda praecipiantur. Proinde ad sacerdotes pertinet inquirere superstitiones quae in sua regione occasione matrimoniorum forsan reperiuntur; de illis Ordinarium certiore facere, atque conari ut illae penitus destruantur.

In Shanghai Council, the Matrimony contains one article referencing the papal order related to the Chinese Rites (*Rituum Sinensium*) to identify whether indigenous superstition is behind such marriages. The Canton Conference is more centered on pastoral issues, that is the concubines or nullity of the marriage¹⁸.

Sacraments	The number of articles mentioned in	
	Canton (1667)	Shanghai (1924)
1. De Baptismo	8	38
2. De Confirmatione	1	13
3. De Eucharistia	8	36
4. De Paenitentia	4	28
5. De Extrema Unctione	1	12
6. De Ordine	0	19
7. De Matrimonio	2	47

The above articles of the Shanghai Council, in addition to their constant emphasis on sacramental and liturgical regulation, also illustrate the changes in the authority of bishops and vicars. The above table summarizes the number of articles by categories mentioned in the Canton Conference and the Shanghai Council.

18 Canton Conference article 39: Just as formerly the old Fathers of this mission did, So now the Fathers of the Cantonese group considered marriages among the Chinese non-Christians as true and legitimate, notwithstanding the abuses of some people, they can be dissolved only with the Pontifical dispensation in favor of the Faith in the cases expressed by the Popes themselves; as it is seen in the bull of Gregory XIII, dated 25th January 1585, which “starts with “Populis, ac Nationibus, etc.” and in the bull of Pius V, dated 2nd August 1671, which starts with “Romani Pontificis aequa, & circumspecta providentia etc.” / 正如過往的神父，現在廣東的神父也認為中國非教友之間 締結的婚姻是有效的。關於解散問題，雖然這樣會被一些人濫用，但他們也只能根據維護信仰的教宗訓令解決。訓首令參見額我略八世一五八五年一月二十五日的《為民為國》，以及庇護五世一六七一年八月二日的 “Romani Pontificis aequa, & circumspecta providentia

The provisions of the Canton Conference most emphasize pastoral works and adaptation to the local culture. For example, quite several articles mention pastoral work for local Chinese women and liturgical adaptation, etc.

The Shanghai Council was very different from the Canton Conference in that the Shanghai Council mentioned a lot of codes and norms for implementing pastoral works. However, they are all universal standards, and fewer concerns were considered regarding pastoral arrangements. It could be possible that they have discussed a wide range of pastoral concerns in the Council, but it was not revealed in the published *Acta et Decerta*. Many scholars center the focus of the Shanghai Council in the concern of adaptation to the local Chinese culture. However, having closely counted the articles, it is very explicit that more emphasis was centered on the hierarchy's authority - the Bishops and the Vicars Apostolic.

The context of the Shanghai Council clearly showed that the French protectorate influenced the Catholic Church in China before the Council convened. Monsignor Constantini suggested that the Catholic Church in China needed to gradually become "more universal," just like those in other countries worldwide, such as Europe, America, etc., rather than a local Church under the proxy of different countries. Constantini made it clear to the French government twice that he expected the Church to abide by its rules to the Universal Church and that it was not a church under the regulations of any country, but in the end, the French government was reluctant to discuss it.

4.2 The authorities of the Bishop and Vicar Apostolic

After a detailed analysis of the article distributions, I have come up with a significant finding that prevails over all comparisons: 346 articles (40%) are served to mandate the authorities of the Bishops and the Vicars in the Shanghai Council. In particular, 253 articles in the Shanghai Council refer to the Bishop/Episcopal authority, and 93 articles refer to the Vicar Apostolic authority. I am attaching two examples, for instance, to highlight this phenomenon.

<p>[11] 參與本主教會議的主教們認真研究和辨別那些寫在《教會法典》290條的事，即比較大的主教會議的決議的目標是用統一的規則來指導一切牧首和福音的同工，如果地方條件的差距允許這麼做。本主教會議的特殊目標是在有可能的條件下在華夏推行《教會法典》的種種規定，並要商量那些比較適合這個民族的福傳方式。</p>	<p>Patres, in hoc Concilio Sinensi congregati, studiose inquirunt ac decernunt ea quae in can. 290 indicantur esse obiectum decretorum Conciliorum Plenariorum, ita ut, quantum sinit diversa locorum condicio, una veluti regula universi animarum Rectores ceterique operarii evangelici regantur.</p> <p>Peculiaris vero huius Concilii finis est praescripta Codicis Iuris Canonici ad Sinas, quantum fieri potest, conferre, et de iis consulere mediis quae ad gentium evangelizationem aptiora videntur.</p>
<p>[71] 如果宗座代牧和監理沒有主教尊位，他們仍然有權力去實行《教會法典》所羅列的那些行動。</p>	<p>Vicarii et Praefecti Apostolici, etsi episcopali dignitate careant, exercere possunt eos potestatis actus qui in Codice enumerantur.</p>

The high portions of the quotations from the Canon Law shows that the focus of the Synod was to emphasize the Code of Canon Law as the foundation for strengthening the powers of bishops and vicars.

4.3 On the Chinese Rites Controversy

It is necessary to repeat the divergent point on the Rites Controversy by looking at article no.41 in the Canton Conference once again, which serves as a clause in favor of the Chinese Rites:

With regard to the ceremonies by which the Chinese honor their master, Confucius, and their deceased, the responses of the Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition approved by His Holiness Alexander VII in 1656 are to be followed completely because they are founded on a very probable opinion to which no evidence to the contrary can be opposed, and positing this probability, we must not close the door of salvation to innumerable Chinese who would be prevented access to the Christian religion if they were prohibited from doing those things which licitly and with good faith may be done, and which they would be forced to put aside with the gravest disadvantages.¹⁹

However, we should also remember that the fathers of the Shanghai Council remind the missionaries as well as the native priests of the obligation to take the oath against the Chinese rites as prescribed by Benedict XIV in 1742, removed the rites question from the formal debates of the Shanghai Council. They believed simultaneously that the whole matter of the rites should be reexamined and that they should provide Rome with the necessary information and

¹⁹ Ip, “Canton Conference (1667-1668) - Its Significance on the 42 Articles”:37.

leave the matter to the judgment of the Holy See.²⁰ They all understand that this Council could not become a debate platform for the Chinese Rites issue, which they are still forbidden at that moment.

The Shanghai Council of 1924 discussed and reached minimal compromises²¹ in 5 articles, such as allowing the laity to participate in Chinese ritual traditions under certain conditions while maintaining reservations about specific practices. These compromises temporarily eased the conflict between the two sides. Still, they did not solve the fundamental problem of cultural differences that would affect the subsequent development of Catholicism in China.

4.4 The aftermath of the Shanghai Council

Two years after 1924, in the encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* (February 28, 1926), Pius XI reaffirmed Benedict XV's principles in the *Maximum Illud*, especially regarding the local clergy. On the same day, Pope Pius XI personally ordained six Chinese bishops in Rome - the first Chinese bishops since Luo Wenzao in 1685: 1 From the secular clergy: Philip Zhao 趙懷義 (Apostolic Vicariate of Xuanhua, Hebei); 2 Franciscans: Odoric Cheng 成和德 (Apostolic Prefecture of Puqi, Hubei); Aloysius Chen 陳國砥 (Apostolic Vicariate of Fenyang, Shanxi); 2 Vincentians: Melchior Sun 孫德禎 (Apostolic Prefecture of Lixian, Hebei); Joseph Hu 胡若山 (Apostolic Vicariate of Taizhou, Zhejiang); 1 Jesuit: Simon Zhu 朱開敏 (Apostolic Vicariate of Haimen, Jiangsu)

In addition to the new Chinese Bishops, two local Congregations were then established: the Disciples of the Lord (founded in 1928 [1931] by the Apostolic Delegate Celso Costantini) and the Little Brothers of St. John the Baptist (established by Fr. Vincent Lebbe and Mons. Melchior Sun De-zhen, CM, in 1928 in Anguo, Hebei).

The Shanghai Council also led the establishment of various committees and religious movements in different fields. These subsequent actions significantly developed local pastoral work and demonstrated the Shanghai Council's far-reaching influence on the Catholic Church in China.

20 George Minamiki, *The Chinese rites controversy from its beginning to modern times* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 192-193.

21 In missiological approach, Fr. Matteo Ricci's accommodation missionary method can be articulated in an eight-fold paradigm. See Criveller, "The Parable of Inculturation of the Gospel in China: A Catholic Viewpoint", (Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, CUHK, 2003), 25-26.

5. Some concluding remarks

Other scholars have also analyzed the Shanghai Council, such as the Austrian scholar Professor Leopold Leeb, who used Chinese culture as the entry point of his article to examine the promotion and influence of the Shanghai Council on Chinese culture, such as Concern of both Chinese and foreign languages; Translation of Chinese Bible; On the status of local clergies; Chinese Indigenous liturgy, music, architecture; Support of research in Chinese archeology, history, arts, and other cultural patrimonial researchers²²

First, after analyzing and comparing these two “meetings”, in terms of theological reflections, this article explores how Celso Constantini, through hosting the Shanghai Council, realize the idea shared with Fr. Lebbe: “*La Chine aux Chinois*”²³. The Shanghai Council paves the Catholic Church in China in laying the foundation on the recognition of power of bishops and apostolic vicars. One of the main themes is establishing a local church, similar to other countries, with Rome as the center of the church and the faith while preserving local characteristics rather than having churches that belong to any local region.

Second, I begin understanding Constantini’s central idea. He repeatedly emphasized the church in China as a Catholic church rather than a church protected by a foreign government sent to China. He clearly opposed colonialism and wanted to establish a local church.

Third, why were there so many references to canon law? The conference at the time was to emphasize that the church in China needs to move towards a universal church. The universal church has its own rules. Although this article does not discuss the importance of Canon Law in the church, if we follow Canon Law, we are abiding by the church’s legal regulations rather than limiting ourselves to any domestic laws. This is precisely Constantini’s idea to move China towards a universal church.

This article analyzes and compares the Canton Conference and the *Primum Concilium Sinense* (Shanghai Council), emphasizing the objective contents articulated in the *Actas*. Of course, as other scholars have mentioned, the conference discussions also touched upon the dimension of Chinese local culture. The most notable difference between these two “meetings” lies in the varying emphasis on the canonical and pastoral aspects. The intensity of canonical

22 Leopold Leeb, “The national council of 1924 and the Catholic view of Chinese culture,” *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* 25(2011): 173-192.

23 Costantini, “Réforme des Missions au XXe Siècle”, traduit et adapté de l’italien par Jean Bruls (Paris : Casterman, 1960), 91.

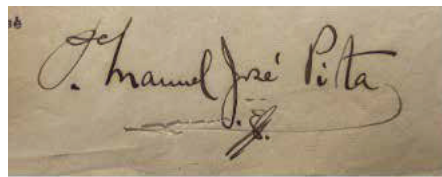
mandates strongly desires the Chinese Church to become a Universal Church.

To conclude this paper and the conference discussion here in Macau, it is also worth mentioning that the representative from Macau who attended the Shanghai Council was **Father Manuel José Pita**²⁴ (see attachment below of his autograph), who was mentioned in the diocesan gazette *Boletim Eclesiástico da Diocese de Macau*²⁵, as well as in Professor Leopold Leeb's translation of *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*. There is a variation of his name on whether it is named "Pita" or "Pitta". At least we found out both records in our Diocesan Historical Archives. It may deserve more comprehensive research on the historical documents and records on this account.

1. Picture of Father Manuel José
(Pita/ Pitta)

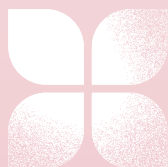


2. Autograph of Father Manuel José
(Pita/Pitta)



24 He is the Procurator of the Catholic Diocese of Macau at the time. The Diocesan Office of Historical Archives and Patrimony has few records about him. Interestingly, his name is written as "MANUEL PITTA" in the Shanghai Council participant list, but this name cannot be found in our Diocesan database. We then discovered in his archival holding that his telegram signature and the name mentioned in Father Manuel Teixeira's book is "Manuel José Pita Lages." The misspelling was identified in one of our Diocese's publications "*Os Bens das Missoes Portuguesas na China*" published in 1917 during the leadership of D. João Paulino de Azevedo e Castro, Bishop of Macau. It is likely a systematic error made by the typewriter at the time.

25 "*1.º Sinodo Geral da China: Carta Pastoral colectiva dos Padres do Concilio aos seus subditos*", in *Boletim Eclesiástico da Diocese de Macau*, 119-123



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